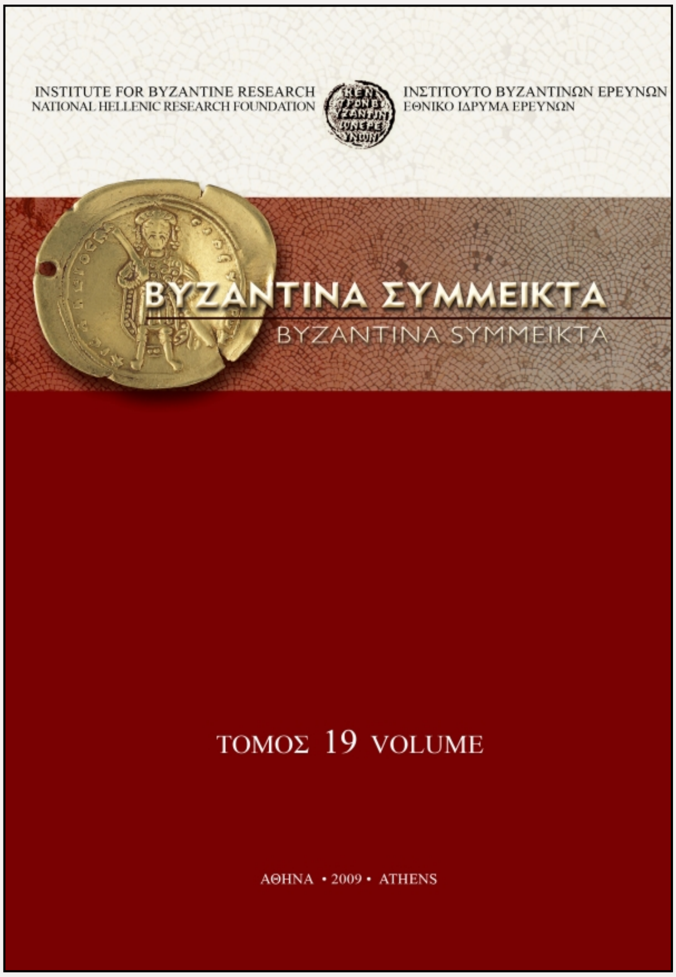
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The Geography of the Provincial Administration of the Byzantine Empire (ca 600-1200): I.1. The Apothekai of Asia Minor (7th-8th c.)

RAGIA Efi — ΔΙΔΑΚΤΩΡ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑΣ

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Efi Ragia

The Geography of the Provincial Administration of the Byzantine Empire (ca 600-1200): I.1. The Apothekai of Asia Minor (7th-8th c.)

The themes (*θέματα*) of the Byzantine Empire were clearly defined administrative territories, which, at their peak (9th-10th c.), were administered by military dignitaries, the generals (*στρατηγοί*), aided by specialized staff sent to the provinces from the ministries (*λογοθέσια*) of Constantinople. Their formation and evolution was a product of a pressing situation potentially dangerous in political, economical, social and military terms, caused by the collapse of Byzantine power in the East under the devastating force of the Arab expansion[1]. The Byzantines were forced to withdraw from Syria,

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1. On the themes see: Ch. Diehl, L'origine du régime des thèmes dans l'empire byzantin, in: Idem, *Études byzantines*, Paris 1905, 276-292; J. B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire, from Arcadius to Irene (395 a. D. to 800 a. D.)*, vol. 2, London 1889 (Amsterdam 1966), 339f. [hereafter Bury, *LRE*]; H. Gelzer, *Die Genesis der byzantinischen Themenverfassung*, Leipzig 1899 (Amsterdam 1966), 8f., 19f.; L. Bréhier, *Le monde byzantin II : Les institutions de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1949, 121, 355-360; J. Karayannopoulos, Die Entstehung der byzantinischen Themenordnung [Byzantinisches Archiv 10], München 1959, 1f., 24f. [hereafter Karayannopoulos, *Entstehung*]; Idem, Contribution au problème des "thèmes" byzantins, *L'Hellénisme Contemporain* 10 (1956) 462f. [hereafter Karayannopoulos, *Contribution*]; G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, transl. J. Hussey, Cornwall

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Palestine and Egypt. The first phase of the violent confrontation with the Arabs continued on Byzantine soil in Asia Minor and culminated in the two sieges of Constantinople (674-678, 717-718). By the time of the cruel and equally fierce second phase (9th c.), the Byzantines possessed a developed military machine whose basis was the institution of the themes, that formed the source of the Byzantine expansion to the East in the second half of the 10th c.

The transition to the medieval thematic system of provincial administration took place at a period of time on which our level of information is extremely low. When the testimonies in the primary sources start increasing, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the new provinces, the themes, were at their peak. The wide-ranging debate on how they came into existence still continues, since the administration of the provinces in the 7th c. was based on the Late Roman model, and at that time, at least, it would have been neither possible nor desirable to replace it with a completely new system. This is adequately attested by the existence of the *ἀποθῆκαι* (*apothekai*, warehouses) of the provinces. The fact that an economic institution, such as the warehouses,

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1989, 95-98 [hereafter Ostrogorsky, *History*]; A. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, London 1973, 224f. [hereafter Toynbee, *Porphyrogenitus*]; J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, Cambridge 1990, 208-220 [hereafter Haldon, *Byzantium*]; R.-J. Lilie, Die zweihundertjährige Reform, *BSl* 45 (1984), 27-39, 190-201; Idem, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber*, [MBM 22], München 1976, 287 f. [hereafter Lilie, *Reaktion*]; W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and its Army*, 284-1081, Stanford 1995, 21-27 [hereafter Treadgold, *Army*]; G. Ostrogorsky, Sur la date de la composition du livre des thèmes et sur l'époque de la constitution des premiers thèmes d'Asie Mineure. À propos de la nouvelle édition du «De thematibus» de A. Pertusi, *Byzantion* 23 (1953) 31-66; A. Pertusi, La formation des thèmes byzantins, in: *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, 1-40; The bibliography on the themes is by now very extensive. More references are found in the above mentioned works and in J. Haldon, *Recruitment and Conscription in the Byzantine Army, ca 550-950. A Study on the Origines of the Stratiotika Ktemata* [Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 357], Wien 1979, 28-40 [hereafter Haldon, *Recruitment*]; Idem, Military Service, Military Lands, and the Status of Soldiers: Current Problems and Interpretations, *DOP* 47 (1993) 3-11; V. Vlysidou, E. Kountoura-Galake, St. Lampakes, T. Lounghis, A. Savvides, *Η Μικρά Ασία των θεμάτων. Έρευνες πάνω στην γεωγραφική φυσιογνωμία και προσωπογραφία των βυζαντινών θεμάτων της Μικράς Ασίας (7ος-11ος αι.)* [*ΕΙΕ/ΚΒΕ Ερευνητική βιβλιοθήκη 1*], Athens 1998 [hereafter *Μικρά Ασία*]. Also see the interesting observations on "the name of the theme" made recently by C. Zuckerman, Learning from the Enemy and More: Studies in "Dark Centuries" Byzantium, *Millennium* 2 (2005) 125f. [herafter Zuckerman, *Studies*].

was adjusted to the late roman provincial division in the 7th c., proves that the provinces still indeed maintained at this time a functional role. Thus, it seems that the "thematic" provincial administration, as it is known from the sources of the 10th c., is an institution that dates later than the 7th c.

The evidence on the apothekai is abundant, although it derives exclusively from the seals of the dignitaries in charge, the *γενικοὶ κομμερκιάριοι*. The function of the warehouse institution of the 7th and early 8th c., its role and purpose, are unknown, since no information on the institution is provided in the literary sources. The terminology used comes partly from early Byzantine institutions intended to control and facilitate the import and trade of silk[2]. So far four theories on the apothekai of the 7th c. have been put forward: a) according to J. Nesbitt and N. Oikonomides, the institution was set up to serve the needs involved in the control and trading of silk. The apothekai were points for the concentration and redistribution of silk, and the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* in charge were businessmen working under contract for the state; they farmed their office, or were even simple tax farmers[3]; b) the second theory was at first put forward by M. Hendy, was subsequently supported by the expert on the 7th c. J. Haldon and has provoked lively debate. The purpose of the apothekai was to provide the army with military supplies, mostly arms and weapons. Consequently, army and apothekai were interconnected. Indeed, the existence of one was a prerequisite for the existence of the other[4]; c) W. Treadgold, seems to accept this theory. However, he associates the apothekai with the very raison d'être

2. H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Recherches sur les douanes à Byzance* [Cahiers des Annales 20], Paris 1963, 157-191; N. Oikonomides, Silk Trade and Production in Byzantium from the Sixth to the Ninth Century: the Seals of Commerciarioi, *DOP* 40 (1986) 33-35 [hereafter Oikonomides, *Silk trade*]; M. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, c. 300-1450*, Cambridge 1985, 626-628 [hereafter Hendy, *Studies*]; W. Brandes, *Finanzverwaltung in Krisenzeiten. Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen Administration im 6.-9. Jahrhundert* [Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte 25], Frankfurt a. M. 2002, 239-281 [hereafter simply Brandes].

3. Oikonomides, *Silk trade*, 34f; J. Nesbitt, Double Names on Early Byzantine Lead Seals, *DOP* 31 (1977) 111-121; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 235-236; Brandes, 290, 302-303, 406-410.

4. Hendy, *Studies*, 626-640, 654-662; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 232-244; Idem, in *DOP* 47 (1993) 15-18. Also see Karayannopoulos, *Entstehung*, 57-58; Idem, *Contribution*, 491-492. Haldon observes that "the connection is too strong to be a coincidence". Also see the critique in Brandes, 300-303. Brandes however admits that certain seals can be connected with military expeditions.

of the thematic institution, the recruitment of soldiers among the land owners, and suggests that the distribution of landholdings to soldiers had already started in the middle of the 7th c. The soldiers were therefore able to exchange their agricultural produce at the storehouses in their district to obtain their weapons[5]; d) recently W. Brandes has argued that the apothekai were a state service subject to the *genikon logothesion* ("finance ministry"), with the objective of collecting taxes in kind, which were then used for supplying the army. Brandes has gone even further and suggested that the expansion of the apothekai in the late 7th c. is directly associated with the themes[6]. The only point common to all these theories is that they attribute some economic role to the warehouse institution.

This brief outline is helpful in pinpointing some of the features of the evolution of the warehouses and in laying out the problems faced by modern scholarship. The continuation and, in Oikonomides' view, the expansion of the network of the apothekai in all the eastern provinces of Asia Minor, that is, the provinces along the border up to the western edge of the central Anatolian plateau, sharply contradicts all that is otherwise known about the condition of these provinces in the 7th c. On the basis of strong arguments it is maintained that the war with the Persians and the wars with the Arabs which almost immediately followed the closing of the Persian war completely destroyed the substructures of both eastern and western Asia Minor, which in the 6th c. already possessed a centuries-old urbanized culture. This destruction caused the break up of local societies and of the social stratification of the provinces, of the cities and of urban culture in general. Much though this theory has been contested, it has not yet been refuted or even seriously revised[7]. In the turmoil of the 7th c., the systematic conduct

5. Treadgold, *Army*, 179-186; Brandes, 410-411. The relation of the apothekai to the problem of the "landing" of the themes has first been thoroughly treated by Hendy, *Studies*, 634-640.

6. Brandes, 291-309, 312f., 410-413. Cf. Brandes, 308.

7. C. Foss, The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity, *English Historical Review* 90 (1975) 721-747; Idem, Archaeology and the "Twenty Cities" of Byzantine Asia, *AJA* 81 (1977) 469-486; A. Každan, Vizantijskie goroda v VII-XI vekach, *Sovetskaja Archeologija* 21 (1954) 164-183; E. Kirsten, Die byzantinische Stadt, in: *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress*, München 1958, 1-48; M. Leontsini, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ΄ (668-685). Ο τελευταίος πρωτοβυζαντινός αυτοκράτορας* [ΕΙΕ/ΙΒΕ Μονογραφίες 7], Athens 2006, 191-196 [hereafter Leontsini, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ΄*]; G. Ostrogorsky, Byzantine

of long-distance trade was difficult. Therefore the policy of maintaining and expanding an institution solely intended to serve the needs of trade in commercial goods, whose main consumers were the members of high society, was incompatible with the constant wartime requirements that Byzantium had to deal with in the second half of the 7th c. One wonders exactly which needs for luxury, implicit in Oikonomides' theory, on the part of urban society the warehouses of the late 7th c. were intended to cater for[8].

The other three theories are similar to each other. It has been supposed that behind the apothekai and the transformation of the imperial military forces into the locally defined and raised military units of the Middle Byzantine era, lies the fundamental problem faced by the government in maintaining its soldiers' status and providing them with supplies for both war and everyday life[9]. It is considered that this problem -or at least one part of it, namely, equipping the soldiers or/and supplying them with provisions- was dealt with by the mid-seventh-century governments by introducing the institution of the apothekai to the provinces. The exact procedure through which the objective was achieved by means of the apothekai is still open to debate. The relations binding agricultural/artisan producer, apotheke and soldier still require further clarification. A tight financial situation would certainly constitute a good reason for this major transformation and innovation of the administrative system, which might then be closely linked to the method of recruitment and to the transition to the thematic organization of the provinces of the Empire. It therefore might also be

Cities in the Early Middle Ages, *DOP* 13 (1959) 45-66; J. Russel, Transformations in Early Byzantine Urban Life: the Contribution and Limitations of Archaeological Evidence, in: *The 7th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*, N. York 1986, 137-154; Idem, The Persian Invasions of Syria/Palestine and Asia Minor in the Reign of Heraclius: Archaeological, Numismatic and Epigraphic Evidence, in: *Οι σκοτεινοί αιώνες του Βυζαντίου (7ος-9ος αι.)*, ed. E. Kountoura-Galake [EIE/IBE Διεθνή Συμπόσια 9], Athens 2001, 41-71. The bibliography on this problem is by now enormous, with archaeologists and historians of the Byzantine period participating in the debate. An all-embracing assessment of the problems relating to cities in the Middle Byzantine period has been published by W. Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*, Amsterdam 1989. Also see the interesting analysis of Haldon, *Byzantium*, 102-114, 117-124.

8. On this issue see the considerations of Haldon, *Byzantium*, 237.

9. Hendy, *Studies*, 619-626. It is estimated that the state by losing the eastern provinces to the Arabs, lost about three quarters of its annual budget.

closely tied to the social structure of the middle Byzantine times, which utterly differs from that of the preceding era. However, the objections to these theories lie in the fact that western Asia Minor, comprising regions a great deal richer in terms of production and much more profitable for the state, did not participate in the apothekai system until late in the 7th c. Whether the apothekai are connected with army supplies, or distribution of land-holdings, or collection of taxes in kind, the fact that western Asia Minor had been excluded for many years from what seems to have been a reform in economic policy, indeed seems odd, especially when set against the background of a territorially defined thematic organization of the provinces. On the other hand, eastern Asia Minor, as we shall see, which suffered the results of the massive attacks by the Persians and later the yearly invasions of the Arabs, was the ground where the new institution of the warehouses was first put into effect.

Hendy has drawn attention to an institution operating in Arab countries in a way similar to the supposed operation of the Byzantine warehouses[10]. It should also be noted that, in the 13th c., under the emperor John III Batatzes (1221-1254), the state bought weapons from artisans, which were then stored in "public houses" in the cities, and were placed at the disposal of the inhabitants in case of attack by the Turks. It is certainly methodologically incorrect to link this information directly to the warehouses of the 7th c., but the example demonstrates that the Byzantines in much later times were well aware of an arrangement such as the one discussed here. In the 13th c. the craftsmen worked for the state and were paid by the piece[11]. Haldon's theory, that in the 7th c. the state acquired weapons from craftsmen as a form of taxation in kind or by means of compulsory sale, which were then distributed to the soldiers, is closer to what the 13th c. author is describing[12].

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10. Hendy, *Studies*, 627-628; also see the critique in Brandes, 301.

11. *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg (– P. Wirth), v. 1, Stuttgart 1978, 285.18-23.

12. Haldon, *Byzantium*, 238-241. The subjects were providing, under compulsory purchase, vending, or as a form of taxation, goods for various needs of the state. These measures are well known, although they were put to practice on rare and extraordinary occasions. On the mechanisms of the procedures see N. Oikonomidès, *Fiscalité et exemption fiscale à Byzance (IXe-XIe s.)* [EIE/IBE Μονογραφίες 2], Athens 1996, 97-105.

However, the implications are more wide-reaching than would appear at first sight: the measure imposed by John III presupposes a developed urban society, which is adequately attested in the 13th c. in western Asia Minor. Scholars of Byzantine history, however, somewhat stubbornly but admittedly with some justification deny that such a society existed either in eastern or western Asia Minor in the 7th c., for the reasons already discussed.

The present contribution offers a systematic geographic approach to the distribution of the warehouses in Asia Minor. This method was first applied by Oikonomides, who had used it in support of his point that the warehouses "flee the war zone"[13]. In fact, sigillographic material published after Oikonomides' study allows us to establish that exactly the contrary occurred, since a good number of seals concern the eastern war zones[14]. W. Brandes, although denying any order to the geographic divisions of the apothekai, admits that some seals may be associated with military operations[15]. Suffice it here to say in advance that the geographical distribution of the apothekai, as it will be outlined below, points with surprising clarity to a possible military orientation of the apothekai.

The controversial issues of the function and particularities of operation of the warehouses do not concern this paper and will not be examined[16]. The final adjustment of the theme and the apotheke institutions to one another, which occurred at the beginning of the 8th c. (and is first manifested in the single discovered seal of the warehouse of the Armeniakon theme, dated in 717/8), can be taken as confirmation of the theory that apothekai and themes were related to each other from an early stage, but it is in itself a subsequent development that appeared after more than half a century of institutional operation of the warehouses, if one includes the years 654-668, when the

13. Oikonomides, *Silk trade*, 35 and n. 12, 44-45.

14. Also see Brandes, 329, about certain provinces during the first Arab blockade of Constantinople.

15. Brandes, 303.

16. The most updated and exhaustive treatise on the problems concerning the operation of the apothekai in connection to state economics has been recently published by W. Brandes. In almost two hundred pages of his book W. Brandes has provided Byzantine Studies with a well constructed and complete theory, regardless of the objections one might raise to particular issues.

seals of genikoi kommerkiarioi exercising authority over the provinces of the empire become common[17].

Before setting out to classify the seals of the genikoi kommerkiarioi in geographical terms, it is important to bear in mind that the following analysis is carried out under the condition that not all the seals have been preserved, and not all of those preserved have yet been published. It is not unlikely, then, that new finds and new publications might in the future complete the picture of the geographic distribution of the apothekai of Asia Minor. Be that as it may, it is doubtful whether the picture given by the results of our research will change significantly, since the seals preserved and already published clearly indicate the status of this institution over the second half of the 7th c. and the first half of the 8th c. A very distinctive pattern clearly emerges from this approach, from which significant results can be obtained and thanks to which new questions can be posed that will hopefully bring us a step further towards understanding the institution of the warehouses and in consequence towards a better understanding of the transformations undergone by the administration of the provinces during the "Dark Ages" of Byzantium.

The first mention of *ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς θέμασι* ("in all the themes") and of *ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν θεμάτων χώρας* ("in the countries of the themes") in the sources occurs in the narrative of the struggle of the emperor Herakleios (610-641) against the Persians in the first half of the 7th c. This mention is considered an anachronism by many scholars, since the author, Theophanes the Confessor, wrote his Chronography at the beginning of the 9th c. and would therefore have been well aware of this institution[18]. The first mention

17. The seals of the genikoi kommerkiarioi bear the effigy of the emperor and an inscription comprising name and title of the bearer, with the formulation "genikos kommerkiarios of the apotheke", followed by the name of one or more provinces, regions or cities, or by a combination of names (i.e. of Pylai and Sangarios, Isauria and Dekapolis, etc). Indiction dating begins with the year 672/3 and is placed next to the image of the emperor on the obverse. See detailed descriptions and chronological classification according to the typology of the seals in *ZV* I/1, 131f. Also see Oikonomides, *Silk trade*, 36-38, who interpreted the typology according to the point of his article; and Brandes, 281-291.

18. *Theophanis Chronographia*, vol. I, ed. C. De Boor, Lipsiae 1883, 300.6, 303.10 [hereafter *Theophanes*]. See the considerations of Toynbee, *Porphyrogenitus*, 234-235; Karayannopoulos, *Entstehung*, 21-24; Bury, *LRE,* v. 2, 339-230; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 214; Idem, *Recruitment*, 30-31; Zuckerman, *Studies*, 128; N. Oikonomidès, Les premières mentions des

of the thematic armies by the same chronographer falls in the reign of Constas II (641-668)[19]. With a single exception, all references to the themes concern military regiments: the Opsikion, the Armeniakoi, the Anatolikoi. The references to the themes quoted can be translated as "in all the armies" and "in the areas where the armies were stationed". The only reference which implies the territory of the theme is provided by Theophanes in his account of the settlement of Slavs "*εἰς τὰ τοῦ Ὀψικίου ... μέρη*" (*in the country of the Opsikion*)[20]. However, this piece of information should be regarded with caution, since the patriarch Nikephoros, a contemporary of Theophanes, was hesitant about applying the same terminology and notes that the Slavs were settled "*εἰς τὴν τοῦ Ὀψικίου λεγομένην χώραν*" (*in the so-called country of the Opsikion*)[21].

Few seals of genikoi kommerkiarioi from the reign of Constas II have been preserved and they are all dated after 654. The provinces in question are Cappadocia (I and II), Helenopontos, Armenia II, Isauria, which was inhabited by a warlike people, and the very heart of Asia Minor, the provinces of Galatia (Galatia Prima and Secunda or Salutaria), with Ankara, a city in which military detachments had already been stationed during Late Roman times, Paphlagonia and Abydos (map 1, Catalogue no I). It is interesting, and should be noted here, that in 654 the Arabs launched an attack by sea against western Asia Minor and the islands of the Aegean[22]. Raids by land and by sea became a yearly phenomenon, especially after the sea battle of Phoenix (655), which ended with the destruction of the Byzantine fleet[23].

thèmes dans la Chronique de Théophane, *ZRVI* 16 (1975) 1-8. Oikonomides asserts that the references depend on ancient, lost sources, and cannot be considered anachronistic, but re-dates the first one in 626, the year that emperor Herakleios started the campaign against the Persians.

19. *Theophanes*, 348.29. Mentioned is the army of the Armeniakoi, under the general Saborios. Mention of the army of the Anatolikoi first occurs in the sources dealing with the events of the reign of emperor Constantine IV. See *Theophanes*, 352.14.

20. *Theophanes*, 364.14-15.

21. *Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople, Short History*, ed. C. Mango, [*CFHB* 13], Washington DC, 1990, ch. 38.9-10 [hereafter *Nikephoros*].

22. *Theophanes*, 345.8-11; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik – J. H. Jenkins, [*CFHB* 1], Washington D.C. 1967, 84 ch. 20.2-10 [hereafter *DAI*]; Lilie, *Reaktion*, 67-68.

23. *Theophanes*, 345-346. An account of the yearly raids of the Arabs is found in Lilie, *Reaktion*, 60f. The events are best recorded in the Arab sources, for which see E. W. Brooks,

The reign of Constas II also covers the period during which numismatic findings from excavated sites in Asia Minor disappear, a fact that has been linked to the reform of the funding of the army and the establishment of the institution of themes (i.e. the replacement of the yearly allowances of the soldiers with recompense in the form of landed property)[24]. Missing from our picture of the warehouses in the reign of Constas II, however, are the provinces of Kilikia (I and II), of Armenia I and IV and of Honorias, all of which are attested on seals of his successor, Constantine IV (668-685), along with the other provinces already mentioned (map 2 and Catalogue no II). *Kommerkiarioi* seals from these provinces during the reign of Constas II, as well as from Galatia and Paphlagonia under Constantine IV, may still be discovered in the future. In this context, however, the involvement of Paphlagonia should be considered as merely geographic, since the province shared common borders with Helenopontos and Honorias, in both of which the warehouse system functioned[25]. Honorias, on the other hand, is a region where troops of the Opsikion army were stationed. Sigillographic testimonies that may be associated with this army[26], or even with the palatine guards regiments[27], occur up to the first reign of emperor Justinian II (685-695)

The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), from Arabic Sources, *Journal of Historical Studies 18*, 1898, 182-208. On the sea battle of Phoenix see A. Stratos, The Naval engagement in Phoenix, in: *Charanis Studies*, *Essays in Honor of P. Charanis*, ed. A. Laiou-Thomadakis, N. Brunswick N.J. 1980, 229-247.

24. Hendy, *Studies*, 297f., 414-420, 640-645; Brandes, 323-329; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 117-120; Leontsini, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ΄*, 112-113.

25. On these provinces during the time of Justinian I see K. Belke, *Paphlagonien und Honorias* [*TIB* 9], Wien 1996, 67-68 [hereafter *TIB* 9].

26. On the territory of the Opsikion see Μικρά Ασία 178f. The first uncontested testimony concerning the Opsikion is found in the Acts of the VI Ecumenical Council (680). On the theme see *Μικρά Ασία*, 163f.; F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert. Faktoren und Tendenzen ihrer Entwicklung* [*BBA* 53], Berlin 1985, 72-76 [hereafter Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*]; J. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians. An Administrative, Institutional and Social Survey of the Opsikion and Tagmata, c. 580-900* [*Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά* 3], Bonn 1984, 164f., 191f., 210 f. [hereafter Haldon, *Praetorians*]; *Constantino Porfirogenito, De thematibus*, ed. A. Pertusi [Studi e Testi 160], Città del Vaticano 1952, 127-130 [hereafter *De Thematibus*].

27. On the billeting of the palatine Scholae in towns of Bithynia see Haldon, *Praetorians*, 119-128; *De Thematibus*, 127; *TIB* 9, 69.

and are provided by seals of the warehouse of Pylai and Sangarios (679/80)[28] and of Nicaea (695-7)[29], while a seal of Sebastopolis (668-672/3) is probably to be associated with the army of the Armeniakon[30]. Another peculiarity of the apothekai under Constas II is the apotheke of Abydos. This warehouse seems not to have functioned again after the reign of Constas II. Abydos was the seat of a customs office and a convenient point for the control of sea routes to and from Constantinople[31]. The fact that reference to its warehouse appears only once can be considered as proof that the apothekai did not actually serve commercial ends.

Under Justinian II, in 687, the institution of the warehouses expanded into almost all the provinces of Asia Minor (map 3, Catalogue no III). There are, however, multiple problems that have to be considered. First, there is the problem of the provinces of Armenia. These were reformed twice in the course of the sixth century, under the emperors Justinian I and Maurice[32].

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28. *ZV I/1*, no 157; Brandes, App. I no 68.

29. *DO Seals* 3, no 59.3; Brandes, App. I no 135. In the beginning of the 9th c., the western parts of Bithynia were assigned to the theme of Optimaton. On this small auxiliary unit see *Μικρά Ασία*, 235-244; Haldon, *Praetorians*, 199-202, 208-209, 223-227; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 99.

30. *DO Seals* 1, no 86.1; Brandes, App. I, 59. The editors believe that this seal refers to Sebastopolis of Abasgia (north of Lazica). On the army of the Armeniakon see *Μικρά Ασία*, 113-161; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 79-81.

31. *DO Seals 3*, no 40.18; Brandes, App. I, no 44. On Abydos see H. Ahrweiler, Fonctionnaires et bureaux maritimes a Byzance, *REB* 19 (1961) 240f.; N. Oikonomidès, Le kommerkion d' Abydos, Thessalonique et le commerce bulgare au IXe siècle, in: *Hommes et richesses dans l' Empire byzantin, t. II: VIIIe-XVe siècle*, ed. V. Kravari – J. Lefort – C. Morrisson [Realités Byzantines 3], Paris 1991, 242-248; Idem, *Silk trade*, 39; J. Durliat – Guillou, Le tarif d' Abydos (vers 492), *BCH* 108 (1984) 581-598.

32. *CIC,* v. 3, no 31; *Theophylacti Simocattae, Historiae*, ed. C. De Boor (– P. Wirth), Stutgardiae 1972, IV.13, V.15; E. Honigmann, *Die Ostgrenze des byzantinischen Reiches von 363 bis 1071, nach griechischen, syrichen und armenischen Quellen* [Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae 3], Bruxelles 1935, 16-20, 28-37 [hereafter Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*]; F. Hild – M. Restle, *Kappadokien (Kappadokia, Charsianon, Sebasteia und Lykandos* [*TIB* 2], Wien 1981, 69 [hereafter *TIB* 2]; *ODB*, v. 1, entry Armenia, 175-177 (N. G. Garsoian). Also see A. Stratos, Les frontières de l'empire au cours du VIIe siècle, in: *Actes du XIV Congrès International des Études Byzantines* (Bucarest 1971), Bucarest 1973, 423 [hereafter Stratos, *Frontières*]. See a detailed analysis in: H. Ohme, Die "Armenia Magna" und die armenischen Reichsprovinzen am Ende des &. Jahrhunderts, *Βυζαντινά 16* (1991) 339-352

The reforms of Maurice seem to have remained in force in the 7th c., as is made clear by the precedence lists of the Church of Constantinople. The provinces of Armenia I and II, with Melitene and Sebasteia respectively as metropolitan capitals, had been retained[33]. Ample sigillographic and literary evidence is also preserved relating to Armenia IV, where the war with the Arabs was constant and cruel until the beginning of the 8th c. at least[34]. In spite of the reforms the church administration of the provinces

[hereafter Ohme, *Armenia Magna*]; S. Gyftopoulou, Πολεμωνιακός Πόντος-Λαζική: οι εκκλησιαστικές έδρες, οι εκκλησιαστικές επαρχίες (7ος-16ος αι.), *Ιστορικογεωγραφικά* 10 (2004) 137-138 [hereafter Gyftopoulou, *Πόντος-Λαζική*].

33. J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae Episcopatuum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, Paris 1981, index, entries Melitene, Sebasteia [hereafter Darrouzès, *Notitiae*].

34. Armenia IV, which was created by Justinian I, comprised the ancient satrapies around the Arsanias river, to which the emperor attached the north Mesopotamian city of Martyropolis. In the geographic work of George of Cyprus, which reflects the administrative situation of the empire at the beginning of the 7th c., the province is called "Mesopotamia, that is, Armenia IV". Besides Martyropolis it comprised two more cities, Amida and Daras, which lay at the Byzantine-Persian frontier. See E. Honigmann, *Le Synekdèmos d'Hieroklès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre* [Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae, Forma Imperii Byzantini fasc. 1], Bruxelles 1939, 64.909-66.964. It is considered, however, that the list of cities and fortresses cited has been corrupted by Basileios of Ialimbana, who added the list of cities of the "other Armenia IV". According to this list, the metropolis of Armenia IV was Dadima (Tadım), which is confirmed by the signature of the metropolitan bishop of the city in the acts of the Quinisextum Council (692). In this instance, the province is also called "Justiniana IV". See H. Ohme, *Das Concilium Quinisextum und seine Bischofsliste. Studien zum Konstantinopeler Konzil von 692* [Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 56], Berlin-New York 1990, 149, no 38 [hereafter Ohme, *Quinisextum*]; *Synekdemos*, 49-50; E. Honigmann, Die Notitia des Basilieios von Ialimbana, *Byzantion* 9 (1934) 211-222; A. Jones, *The Cities of Eastern Roman Provinces*, Oxford 1971, 515-516; J. D. Howard-Johnston, Byzantine Anzitene, in: *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia, Proceedings of a Colloquium held at University College, Swansea April 1981* [British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, Monograph 5, BAR International Series 156], 1983,139-290, especially 249-250 and note 115; Darouzès, *Notitiae*, 42-45. Now, according to Theophanes, Armenia IV was in 702 surrendered to the Arabs by Vaanes the so-called Heptadaimon, who probably served as governor of the province. Shortly after, however, the province came anew under Byzantine rule, since in 711/2 the emperor Bardanes-Philippikos had his Armenian compatriots transferred to Armenia IV under compulsory resettlement. At this time the province probably comprised only the northern parts of Armenia IV with Dadima, since the southern parts of Amida, Martyropolis and Daras had been occupied by the Arabs. See *Theophanes*, 372.6-7, 382.6-7. On the complicated events see A. Stratos, *Το Βυζάντιον στον Ζ΄*

of Helenopontus and Pontus Polemoniacus remained the same as before 535/6[35].

There is no evidence regarding the existence of a civil province Armenia III in the 7th c.[36]. Instead, consideration of the seals of the kommerkiarioi and other sources leads to the conclusion that the province, initially created by Justinian I from regions of Pontus and Armenia in 536 and named Armenia I, had by the end of the 7th c. been dissolved into the coastal regions of the former pre-Justinianic province of Pontus Polemoniacus (i.e. the eastern parts of Pontus with Kerasous and Trebizond) on one hand, and on the other hand what was according to the testimony of the lists of the Councils of the 7th c. termed "Megale Armenia" (Great Armenia)[37], around Kamacha (Kemah)[38]. This conclusion is in accord with the fact that the most important city of Great Armenia, Theodosioupolis, to the northeast of Kamacha, was conquered by the Arabs in 653[39]. Apart from the Armenian

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αιώνα, τ. 6: *Ιουστινιανός Β΄, Λεόντιος και Τιβέριος, 685-711*, Athens 1977, 34-36, 47-48, 103-109, 154-161 [hereafter STRATOS, *Βυζάντιον*]; LILIE, *Reaktion*, 114-115, 120.

35. *CIC 3*, no 28, no 31 c. II. Justinian I did not alter the ecclesiastical status of the provinces, but only unified the civil administration of Helenopontus and of parts of Pontus Polemoniacus in 535. On the churches of Pontus and Armenia see GYFTOPOULOU, *Πόντος-Λαζική*, 108-112, 115-116.

36. *CIC 3*, no 31. See GYFTOPOULOU, *Πόντος-Λαζική*, 139. The author believes that Armenia I of Justinian I coincides with Armenia III of Maurice. In reality there is no proof that there was a province Armenia III in the 7th c., or even in the late 6th c.

37. The Armenian sources, which deal with the reforms of 591 in detail, are at first sight confusing and seem to contain mistakes. On some points, however, the information coincides with the Notitiae and the conciliar lists (on Armenia I and II, and Great Armenia). See F. DÖLGER, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches, von 565-1453*, Bd. 1, *565-1025*, München-Berlin 1924, no 104; N. GARSOIAN, Αρμενία Μεγάλη και επαρχία Μεσοποταμίας, in: *Ευψυχία. Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler* [Byzantina Sorbonnensia 16], Paris 1998, v. 1, 239-264; C. ZUCKERMAN, Sur la liste de Vérone et la province de Grande Arménie, la division de l'empire et la date de création des dioceses, *TM* 14 (2002) 628-635.

38. *Consilium Universale Constantinopolitanum tertium*, ed. R. RIEDRINGER, [*ACO ser.* 2], v. 2.2, Berlin 1992, 826.1-2 [hereafter *ACO ser.2*]; OHME, *Quinisextum*, 153 no 69, 157.111-113. In the councils the bishops of Daranalis, Kamacha, Coloneia, Nikopolis and Satala signed as bishops of cities of Great Armenia. They all belonged to the Justinianic civil province Armenia I, but ecclesiastically Coloneia, Nikopolis and Satala belonged to Armenia II and were subordinated to the metropolis of Sebasteia.

39. *ODB,* v. 3, entry Theodosioupolis, 2054 (N. G. GARSOIAN).

cities[40], the ancient Justinianic province Armenia I had also comprised the maritime Trebizond and Kerasous of Pontus Polemoniacus. These cities had been cut off from the mainland since the Arab conquest of Theodosioupolis in the 7th c. Seals of the “warehouse of Lazica, Kerasous and Trebizond” under Justinian II (689/90, 691/3) reflect this event and should therefore be mentioned here[41]. The territories of Kerasous and Trebizond correspond to the littoral of Pontus Polemoniacus and include its major ports. Their importance lay in the fact that they had direct communication by sea with the Byzantine outposts in Lazica[42]. However, there is no evidence concerning the civil administration either of “Great Armenia” or of the coastal regions of Pontus Polemoniacus at the end of the 7th c.[43]. There is no reason to suppose that the civil province of Pontus Polemoniacus was reconstituted as it was before 535/6, since it is not attested in the genikoi kommerkiarioi seals, in contrast to its neighboring Helenopontus. We will return to this question a little later with further remarks on seals concerning the area.

The sigillographic testimonies prove that the eastern Pontic regions shared common institutional developments, as did the neighboring provinces of Helenopontus and Armenia I and II. The Byzantines seem at this point to have taken into consideration the political realities of their times and the geographic particularities of Pontus, where the narrow littoral is separated and blocked off from the mainland by a steep and high mountain chain, south of which, through the valleys of Armenia, passes the road to the west, thereby providing access to the Black Sea[44]. This was one of the most

40. I.e. Theodosioupolis, Satala, Nikopolis and Koloneia according to the emperor Justinian I.

41. *ZV* I/1, no 164, 178; *DO Seals* 4, no 34.1; Brandes, App. I no 84, 108, 110.

42. The geographic expansion of Lazica corresponds to the western parts of modern Georgia. Lazica was never a Byzantine province proper, but the Byzantines held some outposts on the Pontic littoral and were always interested in keeping the country under Byzantine influence. Cities and fortresses of Lazica are listed together with the cities of Pontus Polemoniacus. See C. Zuckerman, The Early Byzantine Strongholds in Eastern Pontus, *TM* 11 (1991) 527-540; A. Bryer – D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* [*DOS* 20], Washington, D.C. 1985, 335 [hereafter Bryer-Winfield, *Pontos*]; *ODB* 2, entry Lazika, 1199 (N. G. Garsoian).

43. On an opinion somewhat different see Ohme, *Armenia Magna*, 344-348.

44. *The Geography of Strabo*, with an English Translation by H. L. Jones, vol. 5, London-Cambridge Mass. 1969, XII.3.19; Bryer – Winfield, *Pontos*, 2, 20f. On the roads of Cap-

travelled roads in Byzantine times, also frequented by marauding Arabs in search of prey. The evolution of the administrative system in the 9th and 10th c. shows that the Byzantines took special care to shield this region against enemy attacks[45].

The provinces of Bithynia, Phrygia Salutaria and Phrygia Pacatiana are unattested in the seals of the warehouses during the reign of Justinian II. A particular group of seals partly fills this vacuum on the map, namely the seals of "the *andrapoda*" or "the Slav *andrapoda*" (that is, slaves, to be understood rather as prisoners of war[46]), most of them dated between the years 693 and 694/5[47]. These seals have been associated with an event well known to the Byzantinists. After the settlement of thousands of Slavs from the Balkans in Asia Minor, Justinian II enrolled them in the army and called them up for service in 692. During the battle, however, which took place at Sebastopolis in Armenia II[48], they went over to the Arabs. According to the chronographer Theophanes, the emperor in a rage ordered the execution of those who had remained in Bithynia and the destruction of their settlement[49]. Now, Theophanes is rather negative towards this emperor, and scholars cannot yet decide whether to regard this information seriously. It has been argued that the seals, contrary to what is stated in the narrative of Theophanes, testify to the dispersion of the prisoners in several

padokia to/from Pontus see F. Hild, *Das byzantinische Strassensystem in Kappadokien* [*TIB* 2], Wien 1977, 71-76, 104-112, 141-148 [hereafter *TIB* 2].

45. On the themes created in the region see N. Oikonomidès, L'organisation de la frontière orientale de Byzance au Xe-XIe siècles et le taktikon de l'Escorial, in: *Actes du XIVe Congrès International des Études Byzantines* 1, Bucarest 1974, 285-302; *DO Seals* 4, 107f., 143f.; Gyftopoulou, *Πόντος-Λαζική*, 140-143.

46. G. Dagron, *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l' empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963-969)*, Paris 1986, 232-233; A. Maricq, Notes sur les Slaves dans le Peloponnèse et en Bithynie et sur l'emploi de "Slave" comme appellatif, *Byzantion* 22 (1952) 350-356.

47. Only one of these seals is dated to 696/7.

48. The battle took place near the Armenian city and not in Sebastopolis of Abasgia. This agrees with the information provided in Arab sources. See the extensive commentary of Stratos, *Βυζάντιον*, 44-45; E. W. Brooks, The locality of the battle of Sebastopolis, *BZ* 18 (1909) 154-156; Lilie, *Reaktion*, 107-112; *TIB* 2, 72, 274. On the importance of those cities, both of which were bases of military units during the Late Roman times, see Zuckerman in *TM* 11 (1991) 531-533, 534-535.

49. *Theophanes*, 364.11-15, 366.20-23; *Nikephoros*, ch. 38.11-28.

provinces of Asia Minor[50], the provinces in question being Bithynia, Galatia II, Phrygia Salutaria, the Cappadociae, Isauria and Kilikia I, and the western provinces of Asia, Caria and Lykia (map 4, Catalogue no IV). The series of seals from each province is far from complete, and at first sight it seems that at this point, in 693/4, the warehouse of a province was substituted with the "warehouse of the prisoners". However, it is not impossible that the two warehouses were functioning at the same time in the same province. The inscription of the seal of Isauria, mentioning the "warehouse of Isauria and the andrapoda" (694/5), implies that here the same warehouse served the needs of both the province and the population settled there, whether warrior, Slav or other, which suggests that this was normally not the case [51]. This is consistent with the fact that foreign soldiers served on different terms in the army, being placed under the command of a military officer who was appointed from the capital solely for this purpose[52]. One final observation to be made regarding the andrapoda of Asia Minor is the fact that, far from being executed, they were settled in key positions, in Bithynia, exactly

50. Stratos, *Βυζάντιον*, 39-48; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 130-132; H. Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen zwischen den Balkanhalbinsel und Kleinasien vom Ende des 6. bis zur Zweiten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts* [*BBA 59*], Berlin 1993, 216f.; P. Charanis, The Slavic Element in Byzantine Asia Minor, *Byzantion* 18 (1946-8) 70-71, 74-75; Idem, Ethnic Changes in Seventh-Century Byzantium, *DOP* 13 (1959) 42-43; Bury, *LRE* 2, 321-322; Hendy, *Studies*, 631-632; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 71-73, 247f.; Treadgold, *Army*, 182-183; Oikonomides, *Silk trade*, 51-53; Brandes, 351-365; W. Seibt, Neue Aspekte der Slawenpolitik Justinians II. Zur Person des Nebulos und der Problematik der Andrapoda-Siegel, *VV* 55 (1998) 126-132; W. Seibt – D. Theodoridis, Das Rätsel der Andrapoda-Siegel im ausgehenden 7. Jh.-Waren mehr Slaven oder mehr Armenier Opfer dieser Staatsaktion? *BSl* 60 (1999) 400-406. Also see C. Head, *Justinian II of Byzantium*, Milwaukee Wiskonsin 1972, 36, 45-51 [hereafter Head, *Justinian II*].

51. Brandes, 340-341, has already noted that seal inscriptions of Georgios *apo hypaton*, the person in charge of the warehouses of the andrapoda, do not include the title of "genikos kommerkiarios".

52. The best known example is that of the Mardaites, population of Syrian origin, placed under the command of a *catepano* appointed by the emperor. See *DAI*, ch. 50.169-170; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De administrando Imperio*, vol. 2: *Commentary*, ed. R. Jenkins, London 1962, 75, 192-193 [hereafter *DAI Commentary*]; Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, 41; *DO Seals* 2, no 70; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 70-71; Ostrogorsky, *History*, 131-132; H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mer. La marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VIIe-XVe siècles* [*Bibliotheque Byzantine, Études* 5], Paris 1966, 399-400.

opposite to Constantinople, and in the border provinces of Cappadocia, Kilikia and Isauria, which were heavily stormed by the Arabs in the 7th c.; this implies that they enjoyed the trust of emperor Justinian II[53].

The third problem of the reign of Justinian II concerns the much debated issue of the establishment of the Thrakesion, the fourth theme of Asia Minor, located in its western provinces[54]. In one of the most reliable sources available, the royal *iussio* of Justinian II, a letter addressed to the Pope, dated to 687, the emperor enumerates the constituencies of his state, which include military units, and the T(h)racisianus in particular[55]. Now, up until 711 the only operating army with a similar name was the army of Thrace. According to the emperor Constantine VII, who wrote his work on the themes in the 10th c., the theme of Thrace was created when the Bulgarians crossed the Danube, with the aim of confronting this new threat from the north. This event occurred during the reign of Constantine IV, but other than the fact that the count of the Opsikion army, who was serving at the same time as deputy general of Thrace, took part in the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680), there is no other solid evidence regarding the status of this theme at the end of the 7th c., since the information provided by the iussio is still the subject of scholarly debate[56]. The army of Thrace was anyway assisted by the royal army of the Opsikion; troops of the Opsikion were frequently called to the Balkan parts of the empire[57]. Moreover, Lilie has argued that the army of

53. A castle in Cappadocia has been associated to Slavic population. See *TIB* 2, 71; Head, *Justinian II*, 80f.; Stratos, *Βυζάντιον*, 67-69.

54. On the Thrakesion see Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 81-84; *Μικρά Ασία*, 201f.

55. *ACO ser. 2*, 2.2: 886.21-25: *...insuper etiam quosdam de Christo dilectis exercitibus, qui inuenti sunt tam ab a Deo conservando imperiali obsequio quamque ab orientali Tracisianoque, similiter et ab Armeniaco, etiam ab exercitu Italiae, deinde ex Cabarisianis et Septensianis, seu de Sardinia atque de Africano exercitu, qui ad nostram pietatem ingressi sunt.*

56. *ACO ser. 2*, 2.1, 14.20-21; *De Thematibus*, 84-85.

57. R.-J. Lilie, "Thrakien" und "Thrakesion". Zur byzantinischen Provinzorganisation am Ende des 7. Jarhhunderts, *JÖB* 26 (1977) 28f. [hereafter Lilie, "*Thrakien*"]; Haldon, *Praetorians*, 191-198; Toynbee, *Porphyrogenitus*, 255-256; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 90-92; N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IXe et Xe siècles*, Paris 1972, 349 [hereafter Oikonomidès, *Listes*]; *Μικρά Ασία*, 168, 202; Leontsini, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ´*, 145-148, 187-188; P. Soustal, *Thrakien (Thrake, Rodope und Haimimontos)* [*TIB* 6], Wien 1991, 76. In Lilie's view, the count of Opsikion and deputy general of Thrace was temporarily entrusted with the administration of the newly created theme in 680. The theme of Thrace, how-

Thrace had been settled in Asia Minor since the beginning of the 7th c. on the grounds that the European provinces could not support its presence on European soil, although so far there is no literary or archaeological evidence to corroborate this hypothesis[58]. Now, the army of Thrace would normally have been termed Thracianus or Thracesius in a Latin text, rather than T(h) racisianus[59]. However, this strange term that occurs in the *iussio* seems to be a direct transliteration into Latin of its Greek equivalent, which appears, admittedly somewhat rarely, in literary sources, and in seal inscriptions. The Greek term "Thracesianus" means "soldier of the theme of Thrace". In the light of this, it seems reasonable to conclude that the theme mentioned in the iussio is in fact the theme of Thrace[60].

This conclusion leaves the question of the date of the creation of the theme of the Thrakesion unanswered. The study of the geographical distribution of the warehouses, however, suggests that there was a significant change in the western parts of the empire. The province of Asia is indeed the only one for which we now have an almost complete series of seals of the genikoi kommerkiarioi of the apothekai for the decade 687 to 697, for only the seals of 688/9 and 693/4 are missing. The warehouse of the province of Asia

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ever, appears to be independent in the 8th c. HALDON believes that the count of the Opsikion was the "regular" commander of the troops of Thrace. LEONTSINI observes that the function of deputy general comes from the old prefectural hierarchy (the deputy was actually the deputy of the magister militum), and the fact that the count of the Opsikion also served as deputy general of Thrace is certainly not irrelevant to Constantine IV's Bulgarian campaign, during which the emperor himself was chief commander (and therefore commander of the army of Thrace, although not explicitly stated). On this point also see LILIE, "*Thrakien*", 30f.; ZUCKERMAN, *Studies*, 118-119.

58. LILIE, *"Thrakien"*, 26-28; HALDON, *Byzantium*, 213-214; IDEM, *Praetorians*, 174f.; TOYNBEE, *Porphyrogenitus*, 253-254; LEONTSINI, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ΄*, 148-150; *Μικρά Ασία*, 201-202. The fate of the army of Thrace in the 7th c. until 680 is not known. The view expressed by the researchers of *Μικρά Ασία* and by LEONTSINI that the theme was called "Thrace" within its actual operational range in the Balkans, and Thrakesion when it served as auxiliary unit to the Opsikion in the East is not, I think, consistent with the accuracy of Byzantine administrative practices.

59. The information that pope Conon (686-687) originated "*patre Thraceseo*", signifies in my view the province of Thrace rather than the Thrakesion theme. See *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. DUCHESNE, Paris 1981, réimpression conformé à l'édition de 1955, v. 1, 368.

60. For references in the sources and for an account of the debate so far see *DO Seals* 3, no 1. Also see ZUCKERMAN, *Studies*, 118.

functioned, as was usually the case, with those of the neighboring provinces of Caria and Lycia, and sometimes with the warehouses of the islands opposite to its coast, Chios, Lesbos and Rhodes[61]. Provided that there was indeed a relationship between theme and warehouse, the evidence suggests that a new military regiment, the Thrakesion, appeared in western Asia Minor. The date of its formation can be placed in 687 or a little later, since it is not mentioned in the *iussio* of that year. There can be therefore little doubt that this theme was a creation of Justinian II, rather than his successors. This explains why in 711, at the end of his second reign (705-711), Justinian II relied on troops of the Thrakesion theme[62]. Moreover, it implies that the reforms under Justinian II were much more radical than has been hitherto supposed and probably involved large social groups and affected established interests and privileges. Was this one of the reasons why Justinian II was dethroned in 695? The text of Theophanes, a writer notorious for the lack of interest he shows in the situation of the provinces and in events outside the capital, indicates that the people of Constantinople, and particularly the upper classes, were not happy with the economic measures of Justinian II, who was left without the support of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy by 694/5[63].

The period between the years 695 and 717, ridden with internal strife, is so far represented only by a few genikoi kommerkiarioi seals from the west, the northeast and the southeast of the peninsula of Asia Minor (map 5, Catalogue no V). Of note are the seals of the *vassilika kommerkia* (royal kommerkia) of Helenopontus, and of Asia, Caria and Lycia. Another seal of this group concerns Mesembria in the province of Haemimontus[64]. In Oikonomides' view, the change in the terminology was brought about by

61. For seals of the province of Asia under Justinian II, see Catalogue no III.

62. *Theophanes*, 377-381; *Nikephoros*, ch. 45.77-78.

63. *Theophanes*, 367-369; *Nikephoros*, ch. 39, 40. It was finally a member of the aristocracy, the patrician Leontios, who brought about the downfall of Justinian II. The coup of the aspiring emperor ended with a riot of the people of the capital, specifically –according to the sources- of the supporters of the Blues, who sided with the aristocracy. See HEAD, *Justinian II*, 88-98; STRATOS, *Βυζάντιον*, 77-82; OSTROGORSKY, *History*, 139-140. OSTROGORSKY characterizes Justinian II as an "outstanding and gifted ruler, who worked more than any other to build up the Heraclian administrative system".

64. *DO Seals* 4, no 26.1; K. REGLING, Byzantinische Bleisiegel III, *BZ* 24 (1924) 96; *ZV* I/1, 190 table 33; BRANDES, App. I no 132, 134, 136.

the state apparently taking over the operation of the apothekai, which he regards as a reaction on the part of the new government of Leontios to Justinian II's financial policy. This theory has been contested by Brandes, in whose view Oikonomides' conjecture rests on the dating of the seals issued under Justinian II and Leontios. However, the attribution of the seals to one or the other emperor remains hypothetical, because the typology of Leontios's effigy on the seals is similar to that of Justinian II[65]. It should be noted in addition that all three seals of the vassilika kommerkia are dated to the 9th and 10th indictions, which correspond to the years 695/6 and 696/7. Therefore the possibility that the vassilika kommerkia of 695 were already operating under Justinian II before his dethronement in the late summer or autumn 695 cannot be ruled out, which suggests that a reform had been attempted by this emperor. Leontios, then, would have carried out the measures undertaken by his predecessor until the fixed expiration date, that is, the end of the 10th indiction, in August 697[66]. If this interpretation is accepted, it is significant that the provinces of western Asia Minor (except Hellespont) are erratically represented after 697[67], and so the impression of continuity given by Map 5 becomes rather misleading. Perhaps, then, there was indeed a break with the financial policies of Justinian II, as is implied by the account by Theophanes of the emperor's dethronement? Western Asia Minor is more regularly represented in the seals of the reign of Leo III (717-741), under whom the vassilika kommerkia also reappeared. The reign of Leo III is indeed marked by significant changes. As was the case under Justinian II, the apothekai functioned in every province of Asia Minor (although no seals from Galatia or Lycaonia have yet been found), except for Kilikia, which had been occupied by the Arabs (map 6, Catalogue no VI)[68].

65. Oikonomides, *Silk trade*, 40-41; *ZV*, 135; Brandes, 335-343. Brandes points out that the theory of Oikonomides is based mostly on the person of George apo hypaton and genikos kommerkiarios, who according to the wording of Oikonomides was "scandalously active" under Justinian II.

66. This opinion is expressed under the reservation that the editors prefer to read the name Leontios on the seals. One wonders whether this is not due to the influence of the theory of Oikonomides.

67. Only one seal of Asia, Caria and Lycia is preserved after 697, dated in 713-5, and there is only one seal of Kapatiane and Lydia, dated 696/7.

68. F. Hild – H. Hellenkemper, *Kilikien und Isaurien*, [*TIB* 5], Wien 1990, 46-47 [hereafter *TIB* 5]. Kilikia was occupied by the beginning of the 8th c.

The persistent separation of the littoral of Pontus from the regions south of the Pontic mountain range is noteworthy. This split becomes evident for the first time, as has been noted above, with the appearance of seals from Lazica, Trebizond and Kerasous under Justinian II. Other seals, dated to the opening years of the reign of Leo III, testify to a similar adjustment of the Pontic provinces. The inscriptions of the seals take one of the following forms: the warehouse of "Honorias, Paphlagonia and of the littoral of Pontus" (720-741), of "Honorias, Paphlagonia and of the littoral of Pontus up to Trebizond" (720-741), of "the littoral of Pontus" (727/8 or 728/9), or of "Helenopontus, Paphlagonia and Kerasous" (721/2)[69]. The warehouse of Kerasous also occasionally functioned separately, starting from 717 at the latest, a practice that became standard under the vassilika kommerkia[70]. On the other hand, the warehouse of Lazica, a region geographically contiguous with Byzantine Pontus, was already functioning independently in 702 until at least 716/7[71]. Before 702 the warehouse of Trebizond and of neighboring Kerasous was functioning in conjunction with that of Lazica. The geographic connection of these regions was ancient and already recorded in the Novella of Justinian I[72]. It is also in conformity with the fact that, following the Byzantine re-conquest of Armenian lands, Trebizond became the metropolis of the ecclesiastical province of Lazica in the 10th c.[73]. The developments

69. Šandrovskaja, 86-88; *ZV* I/1, no 226, 227; Brandes, App. I no 182, 187, 188, 189.

70. Koltsida-Makre, no 6; *ZV* I/1, 194, table 34, no 250; Brandes, App. I no 174, 223, 230.

71. *ZV* I/1, no 204, I/3, no 2764.2; *DO Seals* 4, no 35.1, 2; Brandes, App. I no 151, 154, 156, 173. Lazica was turned over to the Arabs by its patrician, Sergius of Varnoukios, in 696/7. The act was considered sedition by the Byzantines. Lazica, or rather parts of it, was since then under Arab suzerainty. It seems that the Byzantines continued to maintain footholds in the country. It is, however, the diminished Byzantine presence in the region that is reflected in the seals. In 705/6 Armenians escaping the Arab domination of their country settled in the Lazican city of Phasis. See *Theophanes*, 370.3-4, 391.18-19, 393.10-16; Stratos, *Βυζάντιον*, 88, 108-109, 161-162; Idem, *Frontières*, 422-423, 431, 433; B. Martin-Hisard, La domination byzantine sur le littoral oriental du Pont Euxin (milieu du VIIe-VIIIe siecles), *BBulg* 7 (1981) 141-156; Gyftopoulou, *Πόντος-Λαζική*, 110 note 12.

72. See *CIC* 3, no 28 praefatio.

73. Darrouzès, Notitiae, index, entry Trebizond. See in detail Gyftopoulou, *Πόντος-Λαζική*, 112f., 118f. (valuable for the comments on the ecclesiastical status of Trebizond and Lazica). It should be noted that the 10th-century ecclesiastical province of Lazica does not correspond to 7th-century Lazica in geographical terms. It seems clear, however, that the creation of an ecclesiastical province in the 10th c. revived the tradition of the civil admi-

attested under Leo III, that is, the separation of the Kerasous warehouse, which was maintained under the vassilika kommerkia[74], leaves Trebizond out of the picture of the warehouses in the early 8th c., apart from the evidence afforded by the only seal mentioning the city during this period. Now from the first half of the 9th c. comes information on a *ducatum Haldeae*, i.e. a district around Trebizond, under the command of a military officer, a duke. This piece of information has puzzled scholars. The creation of a theme of Chaldia is dated to about the same time, whilst both the general and the duke are found in the precedence list of the time (the Uspenskij Taktikon, dated to 842/3)[75]. The fact that a *ducatum* of Chaldia existed in the 8th c. is beyond any doubt[76], and the seals of the warehouses, reflecting the situation as it was in the early 8th c., indeed suggest that there was a division of the eastern Pontic littoral, previously regarded as a single unit including Lazica. A reason for this administrative evolution would be, as we have already seen, the Arab conquest of Theodosioupolis, which interrupted the communication of Trebizond with its Armenian hinterland. The particular strategic significance of Trebizond (i.e. the maritime connection with Lazica), the fact that it lay at the eastern extremities of the empire, the impending need to protect the passes that offered access from Great Armenia to the Pontic littoral and thus block enemy approaches to the Black Sea, are good reasons for founding a ducatum of Chaldia in the area. When this happened, is not known for certain. Since the last seal of a genikos kommerkiarios of Lazica is dated in 716/7, it would appear reasonable to assume that it was a measure taken after that year, presumably by Leo III[77].

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nistrative practices of the late 7th c., which is reflected in the precedence lists of the Middle Byzantine Church.

74. *ZV* I/1, 194 table 34 and no 250; Brandes, App. I, no 223, 230. The seals of the royal kommerkion of Kerasous are dated 735/6 and 738/9.

75. Oikonomidès, *Listes*, 49.10, 53.4, 349, 354; P. Lemerle, Thomas le Slave, *TM* 1 (1965) 285-287; *Μικρά Ασία*, 287-297; J. B. Bury, *A History of the Eastern Roman Empire. From the Fall of Irene to the Accession of Basil I (A.D. 802-867)*, London 1912, 223, 261 and note 2; Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, 53; *De Thematibus*, 73, 137-139.

76. This is confirmed by the seals. See *DO Seals* 4, no 32; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 106-107; Bryer – Winfield, *Pontos*, 299f., 317.

77. Territories commanded by dukes, laying along the borders of the empire, formed part of the empire's defense mechanism during the early Byzantine times. It appears to me more appropriate to elaborate on this issue in one of the next studies of this series, concerning the themes.

The administration of the Armenian territories that remained under Byzantine rule had also evolved. The inscriptions on the seals of the warehouses in the beginning of the 8th c. took the following forms: "the warehouse of Koloneia and Kamacha" (702-704), "of Koloneia, Kamacha and Armenia IV" (713-715), which finally became "of Koloneia and all the provinces of the Christ-loving Armeniakon" (717/8)[78]. What remained[79] of the provinces of Armenia I (while its capital Melitene was changing hands[80]), the Armenian region of Koloneia[81], Armenia IV, which was being contested by the Arabs at the time, and "Great Armenia" with Kamacha[82], and one or both Cappadociae[83], now formed part of what was called the "provinces" of the army of the Armeniakoi. This is the first time that a certain territory is assigned to an army, in sufficiently official terms to be inscribed on a seal. The extent of the territory of the Armeniakon still remains largely undefined. At present it seems far from certain that the provinces Helenopontus and Paphlagonia also belonged to the theme of the Armeniakoi. Our analysis, however, leads to the conclusion that the Arab conquest of Great Armenia would have made the option of subordinating the remaining parts of Armenia I and of the former Justinianic Armenia I to the Armeniakon and its general, and the choice of creating the ducatum of Chaldia in the northeastern parts of this province, a political necessity for the Byzantines.

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78. *DO Seals* 4, no 65.1, 74.4, 22.27.

79. On the territorial losses and the borders see Stratos, *Frontières*, 429-433.

80. On Melitene see *TIB* 2, 71, 233-237.

81. On Koloneia see *DO Seals* 4, no 48; Bryer – Winfield, *Pontus*, 145-151.

82. Kamacha (Kemah), to the southwest of modern Erzincan, was for the first time captured in 679, then in 710 and 723/4. See Honigmann, *Ostgrenze*, 56-57.

83. Whether Cappadocia I and/or II were actually part of the theme of the Armeniakoi or the theme of the Anatolikoi is an issue debated in the bibliography. In *DAI*, ch. 50.83-84, it is mentioned that Cappadocia was a *tourma* (military division) of the theme of the Anatolikoi, but Constantine VII treats the region in the chapter devoted to the Armeniakon in *De Thematibus*, 63-65. See *Μικρά Ασία*, 89, 130, and especially a complete and excellent analysis of the problem in 262-268. Also see *DAI Commentary*, 188; Haldon, *Byzantium*, 219-220; *De Thematibus*, 118.

The vassilika kommerkia reappear under Leo III. The first seal, dated in 727/8, concerns the provinces of Hellespont, Asia and Caria[84]. The seals of Asia Minor dated to after 730 concern only the vassilika kommerkia. As noted above, it is thought that the change in the terminology employed probably reflects a change in the manner in which the institution functioned[85]. The vassilika kommerkia, however, were not firmly linked with the themes, for their functional basis remained the provincial organization as it was before 730[86]. The exceptions to the rule, however, provided by seals of the vassilika kommerkia of cities and regions, and by two seals of the vassilika kommerkia of the army of the Anatolikoi, demonstrate that this arrangement was starting to break up[87]. The presence of these seals can be explained as evidence for the efforts made by the central administration to meet regional needs or even as experiments in governmental practice concerning the needs of the military regiments. They may even be evidence of hesitation on the part of Leo III in regard to taking the final step of bringing the two institutions, the themes/military regiments and the vassilika kommerkia, into adjustment to one another. From 739 and in the 740s under Constantine V (741-775), the vassilika kommerkia are steadily connected with the strategis (generalship) or the *eparchiae* (provinces) of the military regiments, namely, of the newly created theme of Cibyrraioton[88],

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84. Koltsida-Makre, *SBS* 9, 2006, no 5.

85. Brandes, 368-384, connects the vassilika kommerkia of the 730s to fiscal innovations adopted by Leo III.

86. *ZV* I/1, no 243, 246, 248, 251 and note in *ZV* I/3, 1955; *Zacos Collection 1*, no 15; Brandes, App. I, no 213, 216, 217, 227, 233a.

87. *ZV* I/1, 192 table 34, no 253; Brandes, App. I, no 219, 231. These are the seals of Krateia, Prousias and Herakleia of the province of Honorias, and of Chalkedon and Thynia of the province of Bithynia. The seals of Kerasous have already been examined. Seals of the Anatolikon theme: *DO Seals* 3, no 86.37; Brandes, App. I, nos 212, 215.

88. *ZV* I/1, no 261 and note in *ZV* I/3, 1955; Brandes, App. I, no 234a. The date of the creation of the theme of the Cibyrraiotai is the subject of some debate. The seal places the event before 739/40. See H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, *Études sur l'histoire maritime de Byzance. À propos du«thème des Caraviciens»*, Paris 1966, 70-71, 85-87; Bury, *LRE 2*, 342-343; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 96, 97-98; Toynbee, *Porphyrogenitus*, 258-261; *TIB* 5, 45-46, 316; Also see M. Gregoriou-Ioannidou, Το ναυτικό θέμα των Κιβυρραιωτών. Συμβολή στο πρόβλημα ίδρυσής του, *Βυζαντινά* 11 (1982) 207-218; P. Yannopoulos, Cibyrra et Cibyrréotes, *Byzantion* 61 (1991) 520-529.

of the Thrakesians[89], the Opsikion[90], and the Anatolikoi[91] (see Catalogue no VII).

Important conclusions are to be drawn from this geographical approach. Clearly the seals of the apotheke/vassilika kommerkia reflect the transition phase from the late Roman provincial organization system to the middle Byzantine system of thematic organization of the provinces. An institution of a purely economic nature, which operated on the basis of the Late Roman divisions of the provinces, ended by adapting its operational range to the territorial expansion of the military units in Asia Minor in the 740s. An essential prerequisite for this evolution is the settlement of these units in certain provinces, which had taken place by the beginning of the 8th c. This development had been caused by the political necessity of the times, which is particularly evident in the case of the Armenian provinces, and by the multiplication of the military corps in Asia Minor. The state had to build an entire machine to meet the challenge of supplying the army after the dissolution of the early Byzantine structure set up for this task. This need was now so much the more pressing, since its military machine had changed and had expanded, and was becoming increasingly complex with the passing of time. To the original military regiments of the Armeniakoi, of the Anatolikoi, and of the Opsikion, were added the army of the Thrakesians and of the maritime Cibyrraiotai.

Research on the seals of the genikoi kommerkiarioi of the apothekai indicates that the districts where the warehouses initially functioned do not coincide with fixed territories of the themes. Indeed they do not even coincide with regions that were later to become fixed thematic territories as defined in the work De Thematibus by Constantine VII (10th c.). The only exception is provided by the seal of the warehouse of Lykia, Pamphylia and the littoral of Isauria dating to the reign of Leo III, which appears to anticipate the institution of the Cibyrraioton theme[92]. At this early stage, the warehouses

89. *DO Seals* 3, no 2.31; Seibt – Zarnitz, no 1.3.8; Brandes, App. I, nos 237, 240.

90. *DO Seals* 3, no 39.41; Brandes, App. I, no 239.

91. Zarnitz, no 3; *SBS* 3, 179 no 1766; Seibt – Zarnitz, no 1.3.10; Brandes, App. I, nos 254, 255, 257, 257a.

92. *SBS* 6, 148 no 1587, dated in 719/20. The warehouse of the province of Lycia was normally functioning together with the warehouses of Caria and Asia. This is the first time it appears as functioning with other provinces of southern Asia Minor.

were functioning independently of the areas where the armies were “landed” and of the provinces from which they were hypothetically recruited. The geographic allocation of the operational range of the warehouses appears therefore quite flexible. While this is difficult to trace in regard to the eastern provinces –with the exception of the separation of the eastern Pontic regions from the interior of the country-, it is abundantly clear in the case of western Asia Minor. Evidence of this is the fact that the apothekai of the provinces of Lydia and Phrygia Pacatiana, which formed part of the theme of the Thrakesion in the 9th to the 11th c., were usually coupled and were operating together with the apothekai of Bithynia, Hellespont or Phrygia Salutaria, which were later to become territories of the themes of the Opsikion and of the Anatolikon. The geographical flexibility of the institution, which undoubtedly catered for certain particular needs, is also demonstrated by the seals of the warehouses of certain cities or/and isolated regions within or with the provinces to which they belonged: of Sebastopolis[93], of Pylai and Sangarios[94], of Korykos and Kilikia[95], of Isauria and Dekapolis[96], of Isauria and Syllaion[97], of Asia, Caria, Lycia, Rhodes and the Chersonese[98]. These seals testify to the gradual dissolution of the old provincial organization of the empire. It is a plausible assumption that in the inscriptions some of the leading cities/regions of the provinces are mentioned. In addition to this suggestion, however, the strategic considerations of the Byzantines are also to be detected: Sebastopolis lay on the great road Theodosioupolis-Sebasteia –Amaseia -Amisos, on its way between Sebasteia and Amaseia, and so controlled the access to Pontus; Kilikian Korykos was one of the main harbors of the Byzantines at this time, since it lay close to Arab territory, and a military unit was being recruited from there by the end of the 7th c.[99]; Dekapolis, to the west of Korykos, situated on the steep Isaurian mountains of the Taurus chain, consisted, as the name indicates, of

93. *DO Seals* 1, no 86.1; Brandes, App. I, no 59.
94. *ZV* I/1, no 157; Brandes, App. I, no 68.
95. *ZV* I/1, 180 table 27; Brandes, App. I, no 89.
96. *ZV* I/1, 149 table 6/1; Brandes, App. I, no 98.
97. *ZV* I/1, 158 table 13; Brandes, App. I, no 177.
98. *DO Seals* 2, no 65.1; Brandes, App. I, no 129.
99. On Korykos see *TIB* 5, 315-320.

a cluster of ten cities that often became the target of Arab raids[100]. Isauria was also close enough to the borders to be involved in the Arab-Byzantine confrontation and therefore to be fiercely stormed and completely destroyed during land- and sea-based raids[101]. Syllaion was one of the main urban centers of Pamphylia and probably became one of the seats of the general of the Cibyrraioton theme. It was clearly not chance that made Theophanes, in relating the first siege of Constantinople by the Arabs, record that the Arab fleet was destroyed by storm in the waters of Syllaion, although it was actually a mainland city[102]. The straits between Loryma (Chersonese) and Rhodes command access from the wider Mediterranean into the Aegean[103]. The seal of Pylai and Sangarios strongly suggests an association between the apothekai and the military regiments of the empire. The first *aplekton* was located at Malagina, on the lower Sangarios River. The imperial stables, which provided mounts for regiments for campaigns in the East, were also situated there. Pylai was a major port on the Asiatic littoral, serving mostly Constantinople itself, and was the centre of vast estates belonging to the crown[104]. In short, contrary to what has been argued by scholars so far[105], the systematic geographic survey of the seals of the genikoi kommerkiarioi of the 7th and 8th c. is indeed a worthwhile undertaking, for it is impossible to explain the geographic distribution of the warehouses without taking into account the military factor.

100. *TIB* 5, 235-236.

101. *TIB* 5, 43f.

102. *Theophanes*, 354.8-11; Lilie, *Reaktion*, 80; H. Hellenkemper – F. Hild, *Lykien und Pamphylien* [*TIB* 8/1], Wien 2004, 116, 395-402. The church of Syllaion was raised to metropolitan status before 787, an event which may be considered as indicative of the importance of the city in the 8th c.

103. Loryma with Rhodes were a little later attached to the maritime theme of Cibyrraioton. Loryma was simply called "Chersonese" since antiquity, and this name survived well into Byzantine times. The region is qualified as *hoplotheke* (arms depot) by the emperor Constantine VII in the 10th c. and this term has given the bay of Loryma its modern name (Oplosıka Bükü). See *De Thematibus*, 78.12-16; W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften der rhodischen Peraia* [Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 38], Bonn 1991, 3-4; W. Held, Loryma in Karien. Vorbericht über die Kampagnen 1995 und 1998, mit beiträgen von Albrecht Berger – Alexander Herda, *IstMitt* 49 (1999) 159-196.

104. On Malagina see C. Foss, Byzantine Malagina and the lower Sangarius, *Anatolian Studies* 40 (1990) 161-183; *ODB*, v. 2, entry Malagina (C. Foss); *ODB*, v. 3, entry Pylai (C. Foss).

105. See above, note 14.

Given the geographic flexibility of the apothekai, it is not certain which provinces were involved in the vassilika kommerkia of the themes around 740, and were it not for the work of Constantine VII in the 10th c., we would have to rely entirely on vague allusions and random information in the sources, given to us by authors who were not particularly interested in the provinces. It appears, however, certain that the army of the Armeniakoi, according to the testimony of the seals, was the first to which a fixed territory was assigned, attested for the first time in 717/8. The army of the Armeniakoi was established on whatever territory was left of the Armenian provinces, certainly on Cappadocia I and possibly on Cappadocia II. Its establishment in those regions may account for why there are no seals of the warehouse of Cappadocia after the first reign of Justinian II, and why there is only one seal of the warehouse of Armenia I after 695/6, dated in 741/2[106]. The army of the Anatolikoi, of which two seals dated to the 730's have survived[107], would have settled in the heart of Asia Minor at approximately the same period as the Armeniakon. Already in 716 there is word in the sources about the "provinces of the general" of this army, the aspiring emperor, Leo III, which recalls the inscription of the seal of the Armeniakoi, dated to the same time[108]. Eventually, the maritime Cibyrraiotai (739/40) came to occupy the south, the army of the Thrakesion (741/2, 745/6) the west and the Opsikion theme (745/6) the northwest of Asia Minor.

If we admit that the apothekai were in fact connected to the military corps of the empire from the very beginning of the institution, then we would also have to admit that there was a heavy concentration of troops in eastern Asia Minor during the reigns of Constas II and Constantine IV. The pattern which arises from maps 1 and 2 gives the picture rather of the state of affairs in early Byzantine times. By 680 there were two armies operating in the East, one of the theme of the Armeniakoi and the other,

106. *DO Seals* 4, no 74.1; *ZV* I/1, no 260; Brandes, App. I, nos 131, 236. Cf. Zuckerman, *Studies*, 129-132. Kato Hexapolis, mentioned in a seal of 741/2, probably corresponds to the province Armenia I. See V. Tourneur, L'Hexapolis arménienne au VIIe siècle et au VIIIe [Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales 2], Bruxelles 1934 (*Mélanges Bidez*), 947-952; *TIB* 2, 191. The seal can only be explained as an indication of a particular operation. On the campaigns of 741 and 742 however, there is no specific information. See Lilie, *Reaktion*, 154-155.

107. *DO Seals* 3, no. 86.37; Brandes, App. I, nos 212, 215.

108. *Theophanes*, 389.8-10, 390.14-15.

of the theme of the Anatolikoi. The warehouses in regions or provinces close to Constantinople form the exception to this conclusion (in Pylai of Bithynia and the Sangarios river, in Nicaea and in Honorias), and should be explained as being intended to serve the needs of military corps stationed near Constantinople, that is, the Opsikion, based in the northwest of the peninsula. Now the question that naturally arises is why the provinces traditionally associated with the Opsikion, Bithynia and Hellespont, are first attested during the rule of Justinian II and after. A second question is whether the absence of the province of Galatia I after the reign of Constas II, also assigned to the Opsikion army by some scholars[109], is purely coincidental. The discovery of a seal of the warehouse of Galatia I in the future would confirm this suggestion[110]. Only a seal of the andrapoda settled in Salutaria (694/5) and one of Pacatiana (696/7) represents Phrygia in the early period of the warehouses with any certainty. Salutaria and Pacatiana appear both with Bithynia under Leo III[111]. Paphlagonia is also only twice attested, under Constas II and Justinian II, but appears regularly under Leo III[112]. The erratic representation of some provinces and the total absence of others from the seal sample of the early period of the warehouse institution may mean that these emperors were hesitant about imposing large military corps on the provinces of western Asia Minor, which had been densely urbanized and rich since antiquity, or even about burdening the population with the task of procuring army supplies. Moreover, it indicates that there were provinces that escaped the eventual militarization of the times. A plausible explanation may be that necessity required the presence of the military regiments in the East. Therefore the armies of the Armeniakon and the Anatolikon seem to have been initially restricted more or less to their

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109. Haldon, *Praetorians*, 216; Idem, *Byzantium*, 219; *Μικρά Ασία*, 245-246; *De Thematibus*, 128; N. Oikonomidès, Une liste arabe des stratèges byzantins du VIIe siècle et les origines du thème de Sicile, *RSBN n.s.* 1 (11) (1964) 122. Galatia later formed the core of the Boukellarion theme, on which see Haldon, *Praetorians*, 208-209, 222-223; *Μικρά Ασία*, 245-257; Winkelmann, *Rangstruktur*, 99-100.

110. Leontsini, *Κωνσταντίνος Δ΄*, 109-110, asserts that the absence of seals from central Asia Minor reflects the inability of the government to spread the warehouses network in regions with limited commercial activities.

111. *ZV* I/1, 168 table 20 and no 187, 195; *DO Seals* 3, no 27.1; Brandes, App. I, nos 126, 137, 198, 203.

112. *DO Seals* 4, no 6. 20, 11.20; Brandes, App. I, no 52, 111.

districts of operation there, in Armenia, Cappadocia, Isauria, and Kilikia. It is striking and telling that the apothekai for which there is a good numerical sample of seals are those situated in regular war zones of the 7th and early 8th c.: Armenia and Lazica.

The situation changed under the rule of the last Herakleid. The measures taken by Justinian II were radical, since the institution expanded to cover the entire peninsula of Asia Minor. It seems that after 687 a new army was added to the already known themes of the Opsikion, the Anatolikon and the Armeniakon, the army of the Thrakesion. If this assumption is true, then it is also true that Justinian II placed the whole of Asia Minor on a war footing. The Thrakesion was a military corps loyal to Justinian II, and loyal to Constantine V[113]. Leo III and his son and heir to the throne, Constantine V, then, deliberately turned to solutions and practices followed by their predecessor, the last of the line of the emperor Herakleios. The reader should recall at this point that Leo III started his military career as a young officer during the second reign of Justinian II, who entrusted him with sensitive affairs of the state's foreign policy[114]. Under Leo III the institution of the warehouses once again expanded all over the peninsula of Asia Minor, after more than twenty years of what seems to have been a return to conservative policies during a period of internal strife (695-717). The re-establishment of the vassilika kommerkia, which probably reflects a far-reaching economic reform, also took place under Leo III; and the Thrakesion theme emerged into the historical foreground under Constantine V. These measures aimed at reinforcing the effectiveness of the military regiments. The reigns of Leo III and Constantine V indeed mark the turning point in the bitter confrontation with the Arabs. The efforts bore fruit towards the end of the reign of Leo III. In Akroinon in Phrygia the Arab cavalry was crushed by the Byzantines (740)[115], and Constantine V was a little later able to resume the offensive

113. Haldon, *Praetorians*, 209.

114. *Theophanes*, 391-395; Head, *Justinian II*, 128-131; Stratos, *Βυζάντιον*, 161-162; M. Canard, L'aventure caucasienne du spathaire Léon, le futur empereur Léon III, *REArm n.s.* 8 (1971) 353-357 [=Idem, *Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient*, Variorum Reprints, London 1973, no 22]; P. Speck, *Kaiser Leon III, die Geschichtswerke des Nikephoros und des Theophanes und der Liber Pontificalis. Eine Quellenkritische Untesuchung*, Teil 1: *Die Anfange der Regierung Kaiser Leons III* [Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 19], Bonn 2002, 115-137.

115. *Theophanes*, 411.14-26; Lilie, *Reaktion*, 152-153.

against the Arabs. It has been argued, however, that the thematic division of the army was ineffectual during the first phase of the confrontation with the Arabs, and that the real turning point is marked by the reorganization of the professional army of the *Scholae* under Constantine V[116]. Yet the first successes of the Byzantines against the Arabs fall into the period of the establishment of the vassilika kommerkia and the settlement of the armies in fixed provinces in the interior of Asia Minor. The developments that led to the reorganization of the military machine of the empire by Constantine V, caused by the unsuccessful usurpation of the throne by the count of the Opsikion theme, Artabasdos, need not detain us here[117]. At this point, it is enough to note that professional regiments were not involved in pushing back the yearly raids of the Arabs. Instead, the themes were[118]. This may also be the reason why the number of the themes started to increase as early as the reign of Constantine V, in order to become more effective and flexible. However, the issue of the strategy tactics of the Byzantines is beyond the scope of the present paper. The territorial expansion of the themes on the other hand will form the subject of another study in the near future.

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116. On the reorganized palatine guards regiments see Haldon, *Praetorians*, 203-205, 209-210 and especially 228f.

117. The issue has been treated in detail by Haldon, *Praetorians*, 205f.; On Artabasdos also see P. Speck, *Artabasdos. Der Rechtgläubige Vorkämfer der göttlichen Lehren. Untersuchungen zur Revolte des Artabasdos und ihrer Darstellung in der byzantinischen Historiographie* [Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 2], Bonn 1981.

118. Lilie, *Reaktion*, 290f. The author correctly underlines the military significance of the themes for the defense of the empire, since the wars against the Arabs were taking place almost exclusively on Byzantine soil.

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Catalogue of the Seals of the Apothekai, Part One: Asia Minor
Chronological Classification

I. *Apothekai* under Constas II, 641-668

654-659	Galatia	*DO Seals 4*, no 4.1; Brandes, App. I no 39
659-667	Armenia II	Wassiliou-Seibt, no 148
659-668	Helenopontos and...	*DO Seals 4*, no 26.3; Brandes, App. I no 49
659-668	Cappadocia I and II	*DO Seals 4*, no 43.8; Brandes, App. I no 50
659-668	Either Galatiae	Cited after *ZV I/1*, no 139 comments; Brandes, App. I no 47
659-668	Cappadocia I and lower [Cappadocia][1]	*ZV I/1*, no 143; Brandes, App. I no 51
659-668	Isauria	Cited after Brandes, App. I no 46
659-668	Paphlagonia	*DO Seals 4*, no 11.20; Brandes, App. I no 52
659-668	Abydos	*DO Seals 3*, no 40.18; Brandes, App. I no 44

1. The reading "lower Cappadocia" is preferable to Cappadocia II, even though the province is not attested by that name on any other seal. The option "lower Hexapolis", which, on the other hand, is attested in a seal of 741/2 for Armenia I, is rejected, because the warehouse of Armenia I never functioned in conjunction with that of Cappadocia.

II. *Apothekai* under Constantine IV, 668-685

668-72	Kilikia I	*ZV I/1*, no 149; BRANDES, App. I no 58
673/4	Honorias	*DO Seals 4*, no 6.2; BRANDES, App. I no 61
674/5	Honorias	*ZV I/1*, no 153; BRANDES, App. I no 64
668-672/3	Sebastopolis	*DO Seals I*, no 86.1; BRANDES, App. I no 59
675/6	Armeniae[2]	WASSILIOU-SEIBT, no 147
676/7	Isauria	*ZV I/1*, no 154; BRANDES, App. I no 65
674-81	Armenia IV (or I)	*DO Seals 4*, no 74.3; BRANDES, App. I no 66
679/80	Helenopontos	*DO Seals 4*, 26.2; BRANDES, App. I no 67
679/80	Either Kilikiae	Cited after BRANDES, App. I no 66A
679/80	Pylai and Sangarios	*ZV I/1*, no 157; BRANDES, App. I no 68
681/2	Cappadocia II	*ZV I/3*, no 2761; Seibt, *BSl 36*, 210; BRANDES, App. I no 70
681/2	Isauria	*ZV I/1*, no 158; BRANDES, App. I no 69
683/4 or 686/7	Cappadocia I and II	*Zacos Collection I*, no 12; BRANDES, App. I no 84A

III. *Apothekai* under Justinian II, 685-695

685-95	Kilikia I and II	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 180 table 27; LAURENT, *Médailler*, no 119; BRANDES, App. I no 71
687/8	Cappadocia I and II	*ZV I/1*, no 160; BRANDES, App. I no 75

2. The editors exclude the possibility "of the Armeniakon".

687/8	Either Kilikiae	*ZV I/1*, no 159; Brandes, App. I no 73
687/8	Nesoi, Caria and Asia	Zarnitz, no 1; Brandes, App. I no 74
687/8	Lydia	*DO Seals 3*, no 24.5; Brandes, App. I no 74A
688/89	Helenopontos	*ZV I/3*, no 2762; Brandes, App. I no 80
688/89	Helenopontos and Armenia II	Cheynet, *Sceaux*, no 36; Brandes, App. I no 80A
689-91	Cappadociae, Lycaonia and Pisidia	*ZV I/1*, no 166; Brandes, App. I no 88
689/90	[Kerasous?][3]	Cited after *SBS 5*, 55 no 24; *ZV I/1*, 147 table 4; Brandes, App. I no 85
689/90	Lazica, Kerasous and Trapezous	*ZV I/1*, no 164; Brandes, App. I no 84
689/90	Asia and ...	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 165 table 19; Brandes, App. I no 86
690/1	Armenia I	*DO Seals 4*, no 74.2; Brandes, App. I no 77
690/1	Cappadocia I and II	*ZV I/1*, no 170; Brandes, App. I no 94
690/1	Korykos and Kilikia	*ZV I/1*, 180 table 27; Laurent, *Bulletin*, 605 no 1; Brandes, App. I no 89
690/91	Isauria	*ZV I/3*, no 2763; Brandes, App. I no 90

3. The restitution "Kerasous" is due to Zacos – Veglery, and is only speculative. All the writers preferred Ankyras [Ankara]. Both options are unlikely, since the seal of an apotheke of Ankara would be unique and the province of Galatia is not represented after the reign of Constas II. The apotheke of Kerasous, on the other hand, appears in 716/7 for the first time. One wonders, however, if this could be a seal of the apotheke of Phrygia Salutaria. A new edition is required in order to solve the problem.

690/1	Pamphylia and Pisidia	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 147 table 4; Laurent, *Bulletin*, 605 no 11; Brandes, App. I no 96
690/1	Lycaonia	Cited after Brandes, no 97
690/1	Asia, Chios and Lesbos	*ZV I/1*, no 168; Brandes, App. I no 92
690-2	Cappadocia II and Lycaonia	*ZV I/1*, no 172; Brandes, App. I no 99
690/2	Isauria and Dekapolis	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 149 table 6/I; Laurent, *Bulletin*, 605 no 13; Brandes, App. I no 98
691/2	Cappadocia I	*ZV I/1*, no 173; Brandes, App. I no 101
691/2	Hellespont[4]	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 176 table 25; Brandes, App. I no 104
691/2	Kilikia	Cheynet, *Sceaux*, no 22; Brandes, App. I no 100
691/2 or 695/6	Caria and Lycia	*DO Seals 2*, no 69.1; Brandes, App. I no 133
691-3	Galatia II	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 172 table 22; Laurent, *Bulletin*, 605 no 14; Brandes, App. I no 109
691-3	Asia and Caria	Abpamea, *SBS 2*, 258 no 78; Brandes, App. I no 106
691/3	Isauria and Lycaonia	*ZV I/1*, no 177; Brandes, App. I no 107
691/3	Lazica, Trapezous and Kerasous	*ZV I/1*, no 178; Brandes, App. I no 108
692/3	Lazica, Trapezous and Kerasous	*DO Seals 4*, no 34.1; Brandes, App. I no 110

4. This seal is considered a “copy”, and therefore the apotheke is not marked on the map.

692/3	Paphlagonia and Honorias	*DO Seals 4*, no 6.1; BRANDES, App. I no 111
692/3	Isauria and...	Cited after BRANDES, App. I no 112
692/3	Isauria	Cited after *SBS 3*, 181 no 2053; BRANDES, App. I no 115
693/4	Kilikia I and II	SEIBT-ZARNITZ, no 1.3.5; BRANDES, App. I no 117
693-5	Helenopontos	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 173 table 23; BRANDES, App. I no 123
694/5	Armenia IV[5]	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 164 table 18/2; Seibt, *BSl 36*, 209; BRANDES, App. I no 128
694-6	Kilikia I and II	Cheynet, *Sceaux*, no 23; BRANDES, App. I no 128B
695-7	Asia, Caria, Lycia, Rhodes and the Chersonese	*DO Seals 2*, no 65.1; BRANDES, App. I no 129
695-7	Nicaea[6]	*DO Seals 3*, no 59.3; BRANDES, App. I no 135

IV. *Apotheke* of the "*andrapoda*"

693/4	Andrapoda of Isauria and Kilikia[7]	ZARNITZ, no 2; SEIBT-ZARNITZ, no 1.3.4; BRANDES, App. I no 121, 122
694/5	Andrapoda of Asia, Caria and Lycia	*ZV I/3*, no 2764; BRANDES, App. I no 124

5. The inscription was initially read as "apotheke of the Armeniakon", but was corrected by Seibt. So far as I know, it has not yet been re-edited.

6. The last two seals of the first reign of Justinian II are attributed by Brandes to the reign of the emperor Leontios, but here I am following the editors.

7. Since there is no indication of which Kilikia is meant, only Kilikia I is hatched on the corresponding map.

694/5	Andrapoda of Phrygia Salutaria	*ZV I/1*, no 187; BRANDES, App. I no 126
694/5	The Slav andrapoda of Bithynia	*ZV I/1*, no 186; BRANDES, App. I no 125
694/5	Andrapoda of Cappadocia I and II	*ZV I/1*, no 188; BRANDES, App. I no 127
694/5	Andrapoda of Galatia II[8]	BRANDES, App. I no 127A
694/5?	Isauria and the andrapoda	SEIBT-ZARNITZ, no 1.3.6; BRANDES, App. I no 128A
696/7	Andrapoda of Dekapolis	CHEYNET, *Sceaux*, no 26; BRANDES, App. I no 140B

V. *Apothekai* during the times of internal strife, 695-717

695-6	Armenia I (or IV)	*DO Seals 4*, no 74.1; BRANDES, App. I no 131
695-6	Armenia IV	WASSILIOU-SEIBT, no 149
695-7	Constantinople and Hellespont[9]	*ZV I/1*, no 190; *DO Seals 5*, no 23.6; BRANDES, App. I no 130
695-7	Vassilika kommerkia of Helenopontus	*DO Seals 4*, no 26.1; BRANDES, App. I no 134

8. Unpublished but mentioned in W. SEIBT – D. THEODORIDIS, Das Rätsel der Andrapoda-Siegel im ausgehenden 7 Jh.-Waren mehr Slaven oder mehr Armenier Opfer dieser Staatsaktion?, *BSl* 60 (1999) 401.

9. The editors of *DO Seals* 5 read "Constantinople and Chersonese", because at the same time the holder of this seal, George apo hypaton, was in charge of the apotheke of "Asia, Caria, Rhodes and the Chersonese". I believe that the reading of Zacos is plausible because Constantinople and the Chersonese of Caria make an unlikely geographical combination that is not attested in the seal inscriptions for any other province of the empire. On Chersonese of Caria see above, note 103.

695-7	Vassilika kommerkia of Asia, Caria and Lycia	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 190 table 33; LAURENT, *Bulletin*, 621 no 2; BRANDES, App. I no 136
696/7	Kapatiane and Lydia	*ZV I/1*, no 195; BRANDES, App. I no 137
696/7	Kilikia	SEIBT-ZARNITZ, no 1.3.7; BRANDES, App. I no 138
697/8	Isauria and Lykaonia	*Dr. Busso Peus Nachf. Deutschlands älteste Münzhandlung. Auktion 376-377* (29-30/30-31 Okt. 2003), no 1303.
700-2	Kilikia I and II	*Dr. Busso Peus Nachf. Deutschlands älteste Münzhandlung. Auktion 376-377* (29-30/30-31 Okt. 2003), no 1314.
702-4	Koloneia and Kamacha	*DO Seals 4*, no 65.1; BRANDES, no 150
702-4	Lazica	*ZV I/1*, no 204; BRANDES, App. I no 151
708/9	Hellespont	*DO Seals 3*, no 47.1; BRANDES, App. I no 153
710/11	Lazica	*ZV I/3*, no 2764.2; BRANDES, App. I no 154
710/11	Isauria	*SBS 3*, 195, no 501; BRANDES, App. I no 155
711-12	Lazica	*DO Seals 4*, no 35.2; BRANDES, App. I no 156
713	Kilikiae	*ZV I/1*, no 212; BRANDES, App. I no 161
713/4	Hellespont	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 176 table 25; BRANDES, App. I no 162
713-5	Asia, Caria and Lycia	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 166 table 19; LAURENT, *Bulletin*, 606 no 21; BRANDES, App. I no 170

713-5	Koloneia, Kamacha and Armenia IV	*DO Seals 4*, no 74.4; BRANDES, App. I no 171
713-5	Hellespont and Arch... (?)[10]	*Zacos Collection 1*, no 13; BRANDES, App. I no 171a

VI. *Apothekai* under Leo III

716/7	Lazica	*DO Seals 4*, no 35.1; BRANDES, App. I no 173
717	Kerasous	KOLTSIDA-MAKRE, no 6; BRANDES, App. I no 174
717/8	Koloneia and of all the provinces of the Christ-loving Armeniakon	*DO Seals 4*, no 22.27; BRANDES, App. I no 175
718/9	Isauria and Syllaion	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 158 table 13; BRANDES, App. I no 177
719/20	Lycia, Pamphylia and the littoral of Isauria	*SBS 6*, 148 no 1587; BRANDES, App. I no 178
722/3	Pamphylia, Pisidia and Lycia	*DO Seals 2*, no 69.2; BRANDES, App. I no 180
720-729	Hellespont and Lydia	*ZV I/1*, 176 table 25; LAURENT, *Bulletin*, 605 no 17; BRANDES, App. I no 181
720-741	Honorias, Paphlagonia and the littoral of Pontus	ŠANDROVSKAJA, 88; BRANDES, App. I no 182
721/2	Asia, Caria, all the islands and Hellespont	*ZV I/1*, no 226; BRANDES, App. I no 186
721/2	Helenopontus, Paphlagonia and Kerasous	*ZV I/1*, no 227; BRANDES, App. I no 187

10. Possibly Hellespont and Asia. The option of Armenia is geographically impossible.

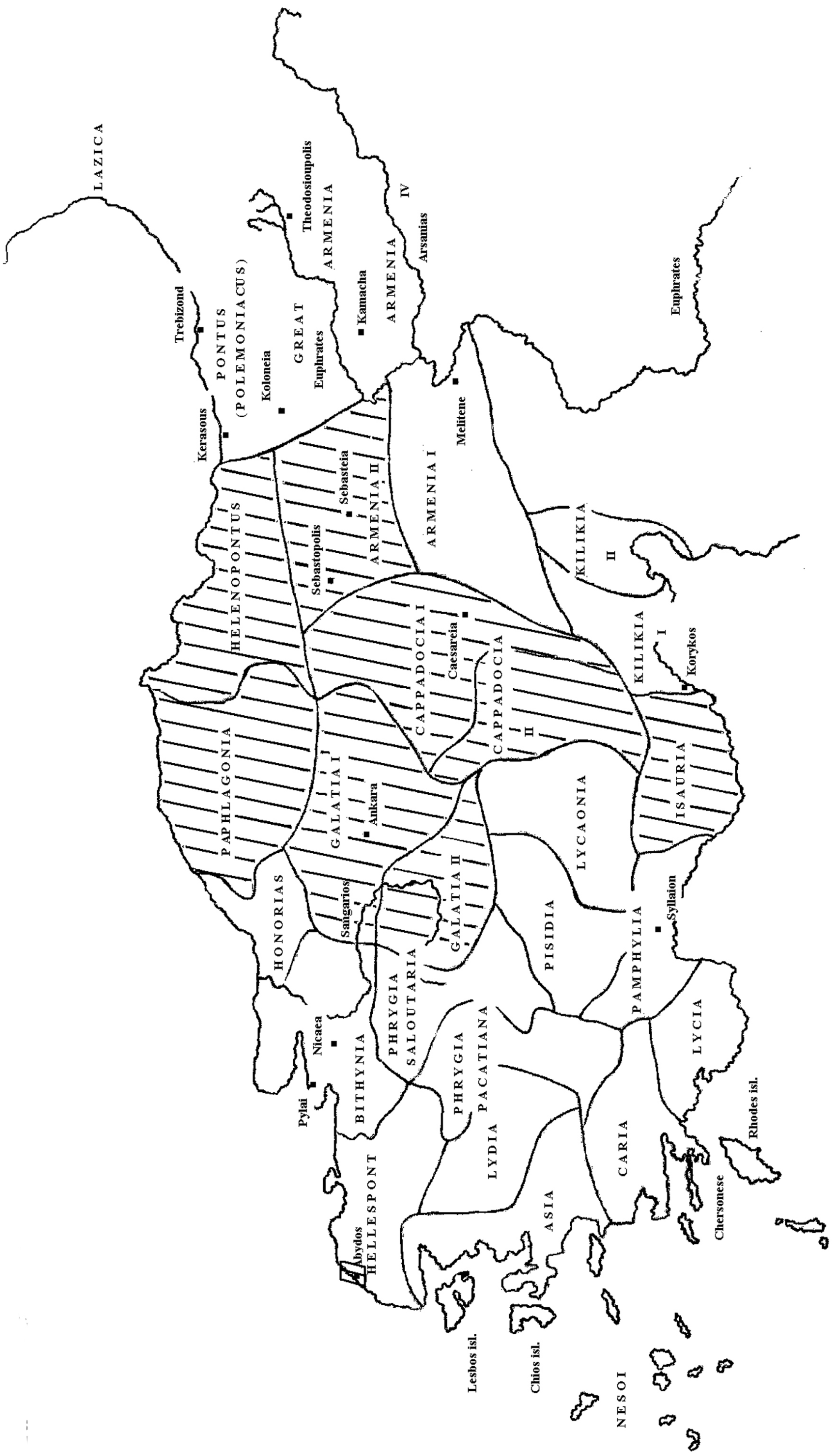
720-741	Honorias, Paphlagonia and the littoral of Pontus up to Trebizond	Šandrovskaja, 87-88; Brandes, App. I no 188
720-741	Honorias, Paphlagonia and of the littoral of Pontus	Šandrovskaja, 86; Brandes, App. I no 189
727/8 or 728/9	Littoral of Pontus	*ZV I/3*, no 2765; Brandes, App. I no 202
727/8	Bithynia, Salutaria and Pacatiana	*DO Seals 3*, no 27.1; Brandes, App. I no 198
727/8	Hellespont and Lydia	*ZV I/1*, no 236; Brandes, App. I no 199
728/9	Bithynia, Salutaria and Pacatiana	Cited after *ZV I/1*, 168 table 20; Brandes, App. I no 203
729/30	Hellespont and ... [Lydia]	Braunlin – Nesbitt, *Byzantion 69*, 193 no 3; Brandes, App. I no 203a

VII. *Vassilika kommerkia*

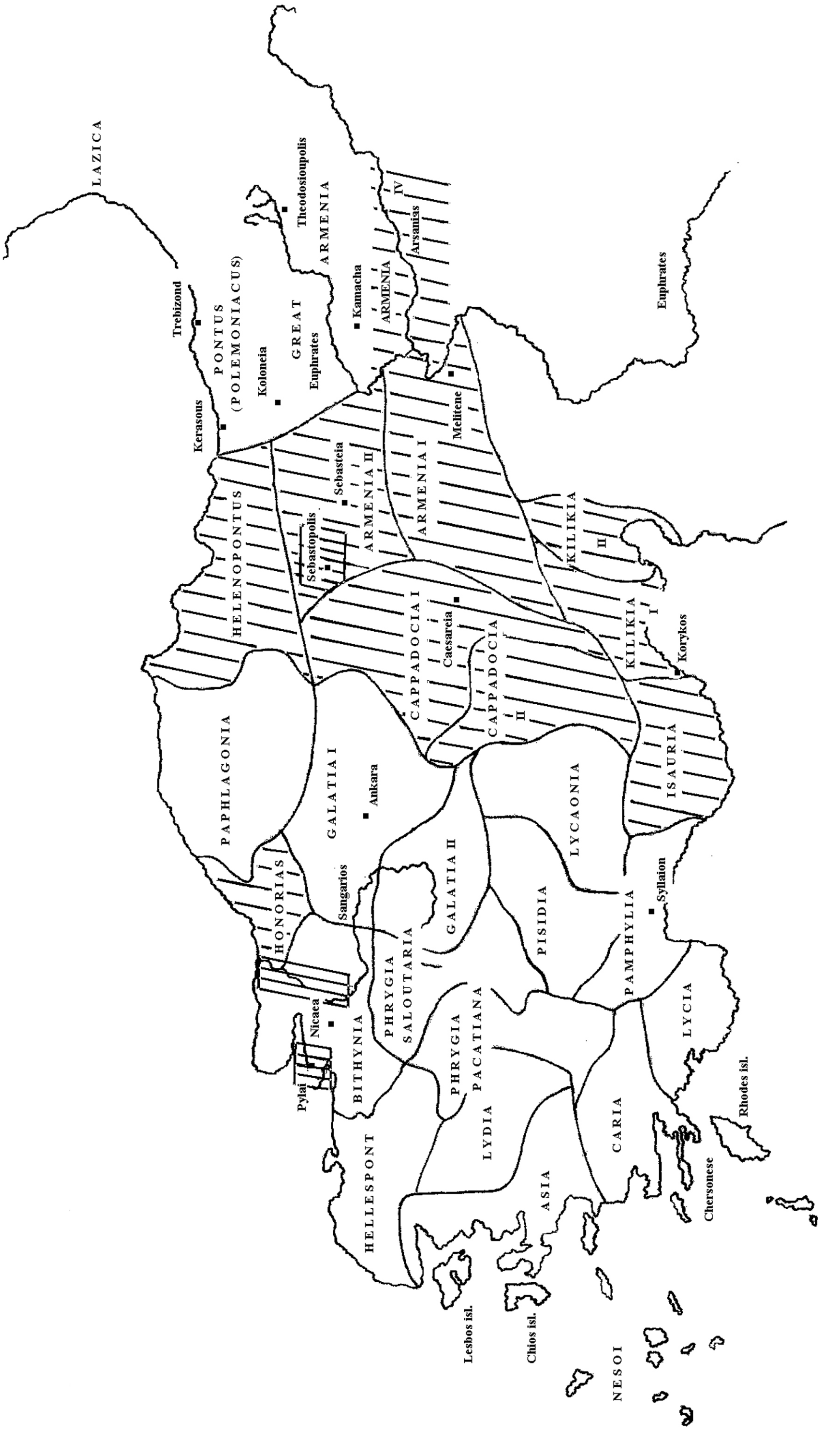
727/8	Hellespont, Asia and Caria	Koltsida-Makre, SBS 9, 2006, no 5
730/1	Anatolikoi	Cited after Brandes, App. I no 212
731/2	Bithynia, Salutaria and Pacatiana	*ZV I/1*, no 243; Brandes, App. I no 213
732/3	Asia	*ZV I/1*, no 246; Brandes, App. I no 216
733/4	Bithynia, Salutaria, Pacatiana and Lydia	*ZV I/1*, 248; Brandes, App. I no 217
734/5	Krateia, Prousias and Herakleia	*ZV I/1*, 192 table 34; Brandes, App. I no 219
735/6	Kerasous	*ZV I/1*, 250; Brandes, App. I no 223
736/7	Provinces of the Anatolikoi	*DO Seals 3*, no 86.37; Brandes, App. I no 215

736/7	Lydia	*ZV I/1*, no 251 and note in ZV I/3, 1955; Brandes, App. I no 227
738/9	Kerasous	*ZV I/1*, 194 table 34; Laurent, *Bulletin*, 622 no 5; Brandes, App. I no 230
738/9	Chalkedon and Thynia	*ZV I/1*, no 253; Brandes, App. I no 231
738/9	Asia and Caria	*Zacos Collection 1*, no 15; Brandes, App. I no 233a
739/40	Strategia of the Kibyrraiotai	*ZV I/1*, no 261 and note in *ZV 1/3*, 1955; Brandes, App. I no 234 a
741/2	Kato Hexapolis	*ZV I/1*, no 260; Brandes, App. I no 236
741/2	Strategia of the Thrakesioi	*DO Seals 3*, 2.31; Brandes, App. I no 237
745/6	Provinces of the vassilikon Opsikion guarded by God	*DO Seals 3*, no 39.41; Brandes, App. I no 239
745/6	Strategia of the Thrakesion	Seibt – Zarniz, no 1.3.8; Brandes, App. I no 240
755/6	Asia[11]	*SBS 5*, 1998: 54 no 5; *ZV I/1*, 196 table 34; Brandes, App. I no 252
758/9	Anatolikoi	Zarniz, no 3; Seibt-Zarniz, no 1.3.9; Brandes, App. I no 254
760/1	Anatolikoi	Cited after Brandes, App. I no 255
773/4	Anatolikoi	Cited after *SBS 3*, 1993, 179 no 1766; Brandes, App. I no 257
776	Anatolikoi	Seibt – Zarniz, no 1.3.10; Brandes, App. I no 257a

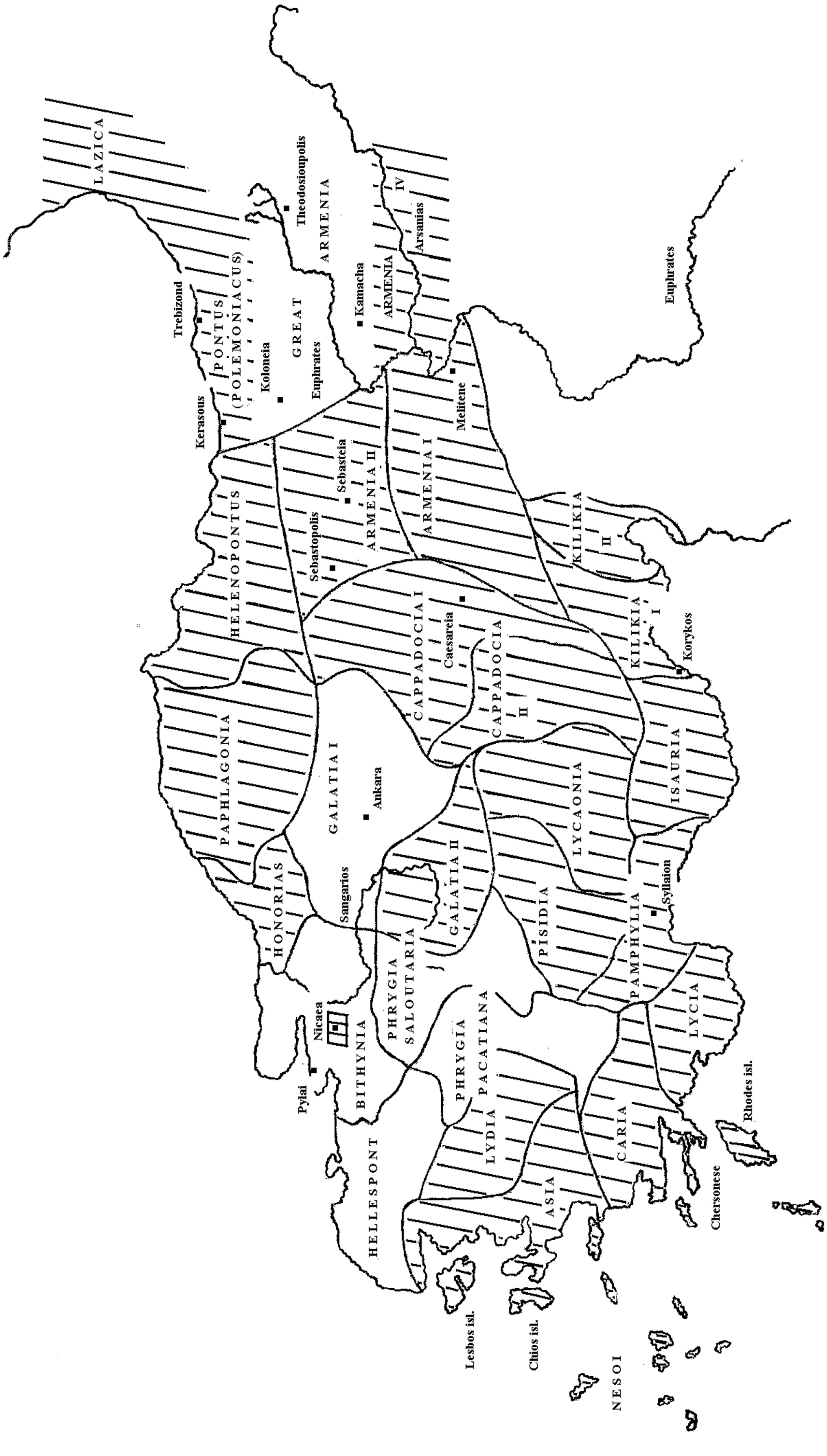
11. The chronology of this seal is highly suspect, since it is the only one which breaks the sequence of the vassilika kommerkia of the themes. I therefore believe that it does not fit the frame and that it should be dated much earlier, probably in the 730s. However, the chronology is accepted by Zacos and Brandes, and this is why it is placed here among the seals of the themes. A new edition is required in order to resolve the problem.



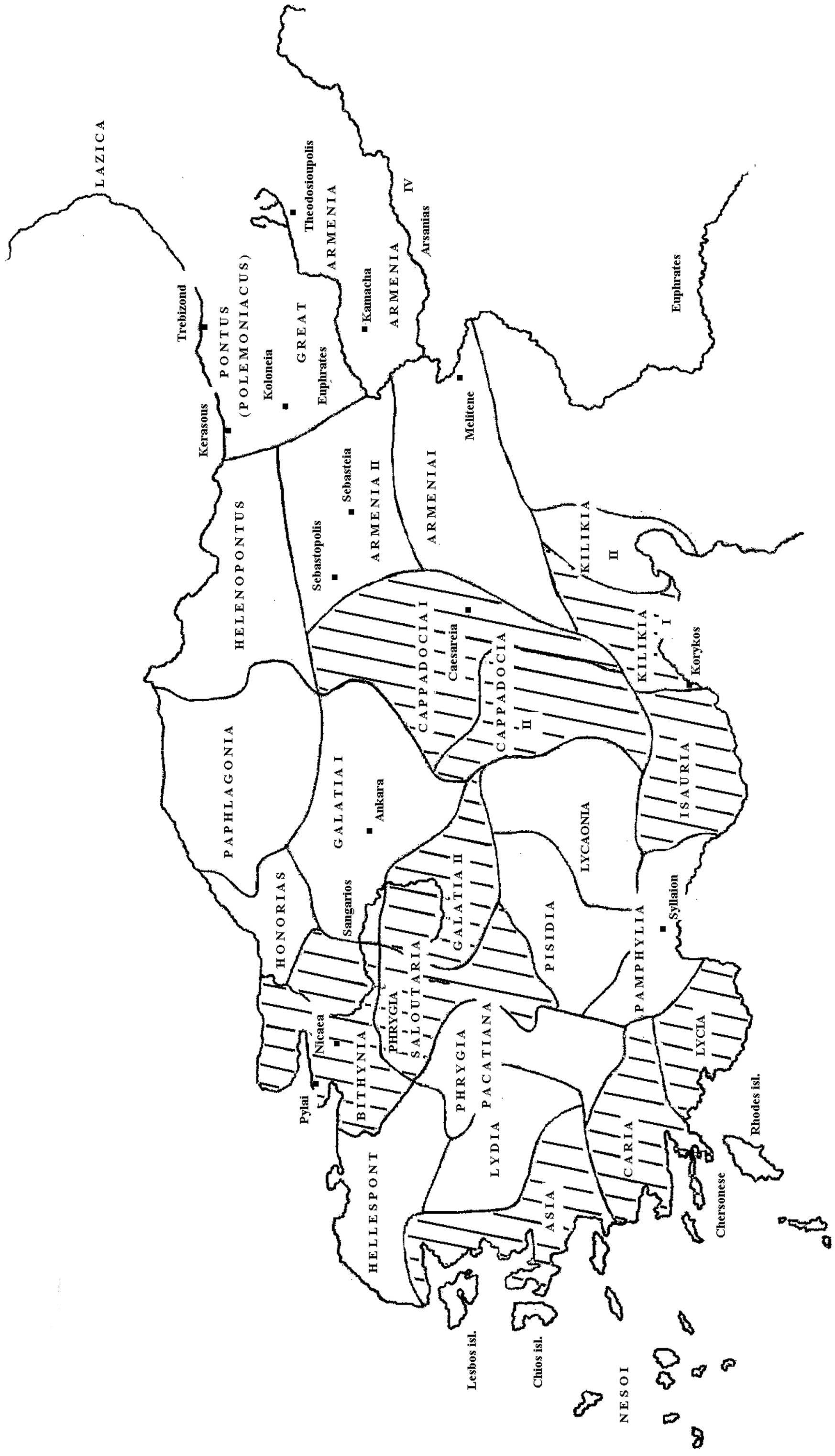
Map 1. Apothekai under Constans II, 641-668.



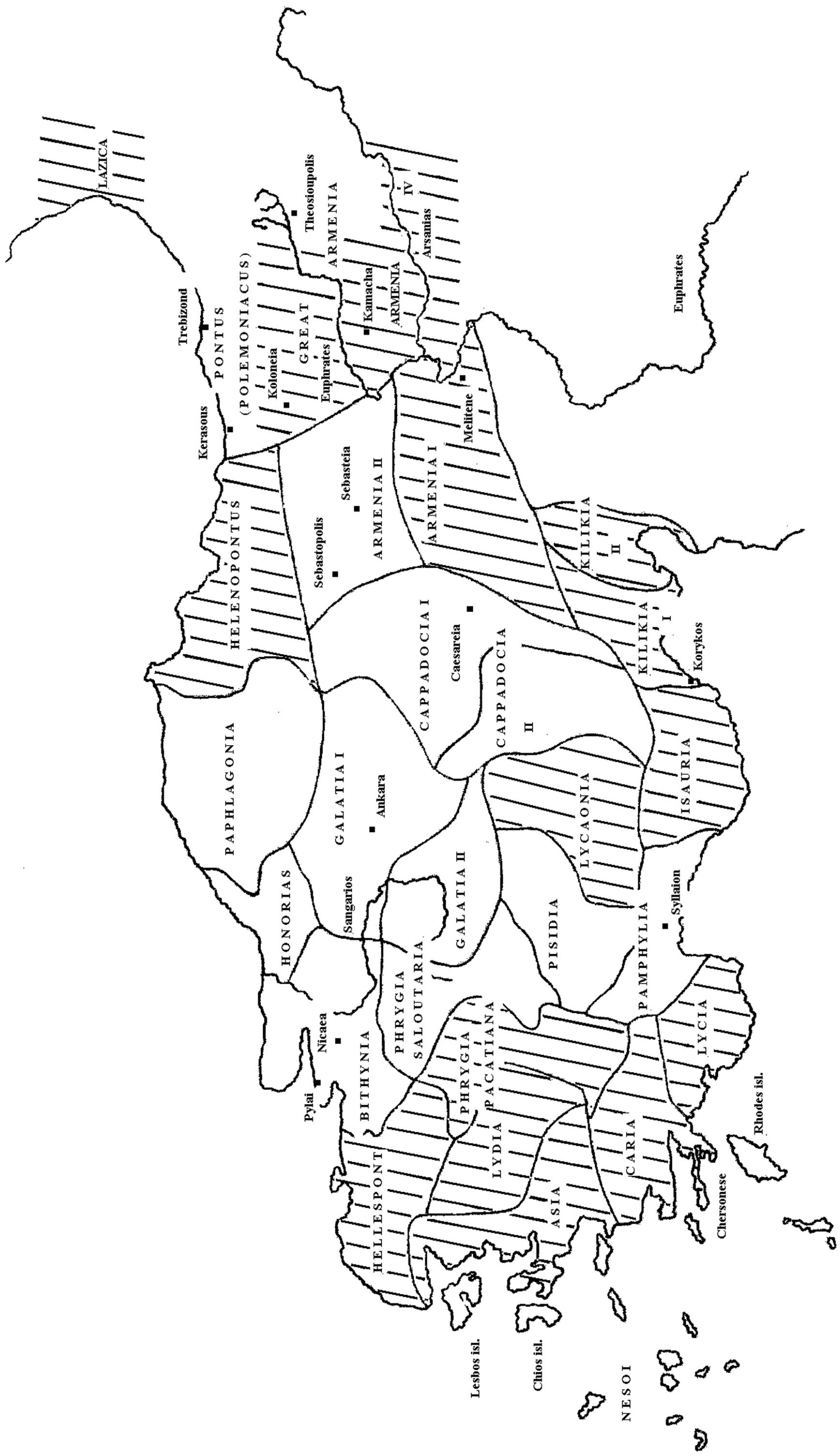
Map 2. Apothekai under Constantine IV, 668-685.



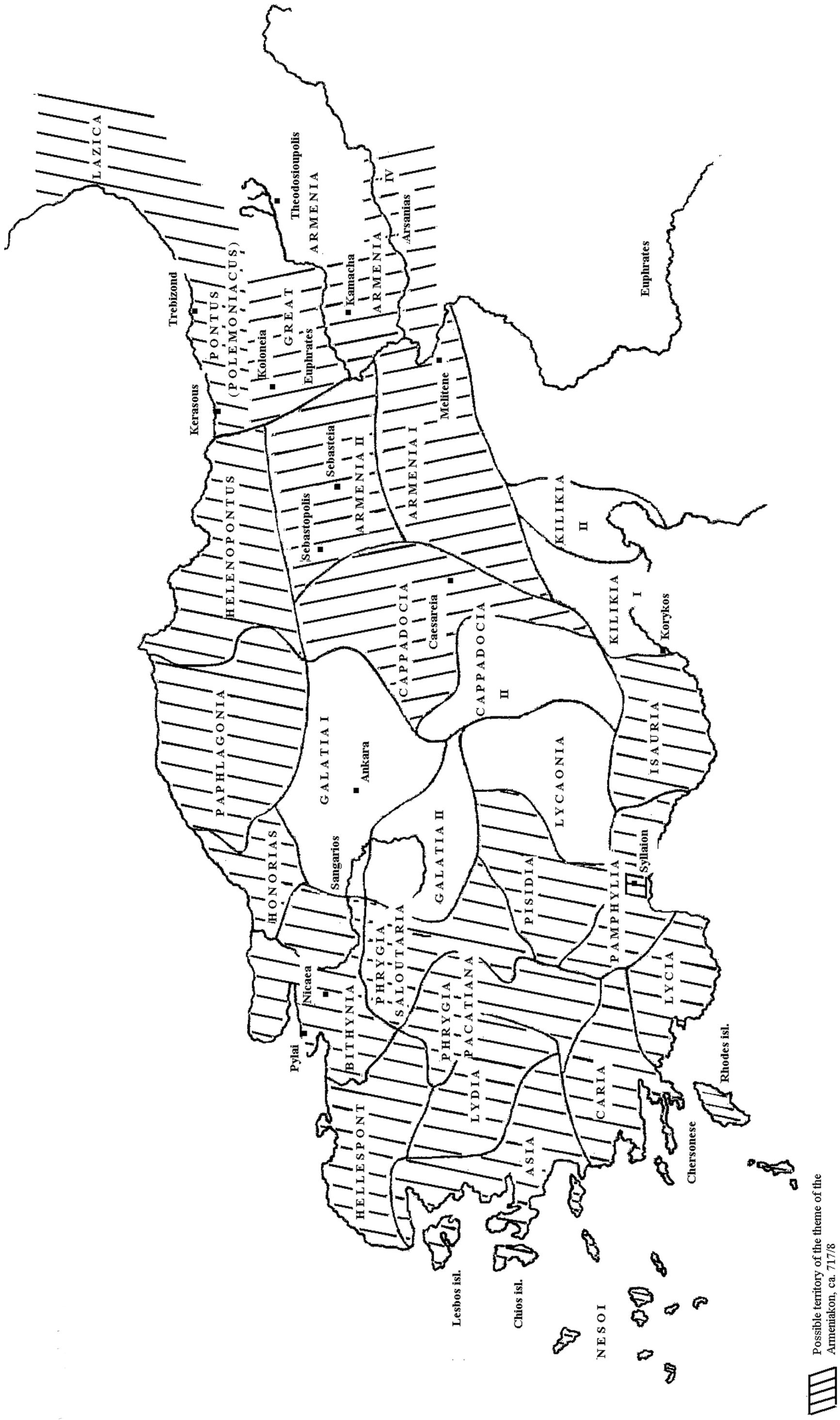
Map 3. Apothekai under Justinian II, 685-695.



Map 4. Apothekai of the "Andrapoda".



Map 5. Apothekai during the times of internal strife.



Map 6. Apothekai under Leo III.

Η Γεωγραφια της Επαρχιακης Διοικησης της Βυζαντινης Αυτοκρατοριας (ca 600-1200)
Ι.1 Οι αποθηκες της Μικρας Ασιας (7ος-8ος αι.)

Η μετάβαση από το πρωτοβυζαντινό σύστημα διοίκησης των επαρχιών της αυτοκρατορίας στο μεσοβυζαντινό σύστημα των θεμάτων συνέβη σε μια εποχή κατά την οποία οι πληροφορίες που παρέχουν οι πηγές είναι ελάχιστες. Ο θεσμός των θεμάτων είναι γνωστός κυρίως από τον 10ο αι., εποχή κατά την οποία ήταν πλήρως ανεπτυγμένος. Το κενό λοιπόν στην πληροφόρηση όσον αφορά στην μεταμόρφωση της επαρχιακής διοίκησης μπορούν να καλύψουν μόνο οι σφραγίδες των αποθηκών και των βασιλικών κομμερκίων, ενός θεσμού που εμφανίστηκε και αναπτύχθηκε από τα μέσα του 7ου αι. ώς τα μέσα του 8ου αι. Σε καμία πηγή της μέσης βυζαντινής εποχής δεν γίνεται λόγος για το περιεχόμενο του θεσμού αυτού, δηλαδή για τον τρόπο λειτουργίας και για τους σκοπούς που εξυπηρετούσε, γεγονός που έχει δώσει λαβή για τη διατύπωση θεωριών που τον συνδέουν είτε με το εμπόριο, είτε με την εξυπηρέτηση αναγκών των στρατιωτικών σωμάτων της αυτοκρατορίας. Σκοπός της συγκεκριμένης μελέτης ωστόσο δεν είναι η εξακρίβωση του περιεχομένου του θεσμού των αποθηκών/βασιλικών κομμερκίων, αλλά η συστηματική γεωγραφική κατάταξη των αποθηκών, που μπορεί να φωτίσει τη διαδικασία διάλυσης του πρωτοβυζαντινού διοικητικού συστήματος των επαρχιών.

Αδιαμφισβήτητος παραμένει ο οικονομικός χαρακτήρας του θεσμού των αποθηκών/βασιλικών κομμερκίων. Ο θεσμός αυτός εξάλλου λειτουργούσε επί τη βάσει του παλαιότερου επαρχιακού συστήματος μέχρι τα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 730. Η γεωγραφική κατάταξη των σφραγίδων των αποθηκών αποδεικνύει ότι ο θεσμός λειτούργησε αρχικά στις ανατολικές επαρχίες της αυτοκρατορίας. Αποδεικνύει επίσης ότι οι γεωγραφικοί συνδυασμοί των αποθηκών δεν συμπίπτουν με την εδαφική ανάπτυξη των θεμάτων, όπως αυτή είναι γνωστή από τις πηγές του 10ου αι. ή όπως υποτίθεται ότι ήταν στα τέλη του 7ου αι. και στις

αρχές του 8ου αι. Τη μοναδική εξαίρεση σε αυτόν τον κανόνα αποτελεί η σφραγίδα της αποθήκης Λυκίας, Παμφυλίας και παραλίας της Ισαυρίας (719/20) που φαίνεται να προαναγγέλλει την ίδρυση του θέματος των Κιβυρραιωτών. Η λειτουργία των αποθηκών ήταν έτσι ευέλικτη, γεγονός που αποδεικνύεται κυρίως από τις σφραγίδες των αποθηκών πόλεων ή περιοχών εντός ή μαζί με τις επαρχίες στις οποίες ανήκαν, π.χ. η αποθήκη Σεβαστοπόλεως, Πυλών και Σαγγαρίου, Κορύκου και Κιλικίας, Ισαυρίας και Δεκαπόλεως, Ισαυρίας και Συλλαίου, Ασίας, Καρίας, Ρόδου και Χερσονήσου. Παράλληλα, οι σφραγίδες αυτές αποδεικνύουν τη σταδιακή διάλυση των παλαιών επαρχιών και υποδηλώνουν ότι το βυζαντινό κράτος, προκειμένου να θέσει σε λειτουργία τις αποθήκες σε ορισμένες περιοχές, λάμβανε υπόψη συγκεκριμένα στρατηγικά πλεονεκτήματα. Δεν μπορεί να περάσει απαρατήρητο το γεγονός ότι στον κάτω Σαγγάριο βρισκόταν το πρώτο άπληκτο, τα Μαλάγινα, ότι από τη Ρόδο και τη Χερσόνησο γινόταν ο έλεγχος της ναυσιπλοΐας από την ανατολική Μεσόγειο προς το Αιγαίο, ότι το Σύλλαιον ήταν μία από τις πρωτεύουσες του θέματος των Κιβυρραιωτών, και αυτές είναι μερικές μόνο από τις παρατηρήσεις που μπορούν να γίνουν για τις συγκεκριμένες πόλεις και περιοχές.

Από τα τέλη της δεκαετίας του 730 και κυρίως στη δεκαετία του 740 και εξής, η εδαφική ανάπτυξη του θεσμού των βασιλικών κομμερκίων ταυτίστηκε με την εδαφική ανάπτυξη του θεσμού των θεμάτων, γεγονός που προϋποθέτει την εγκατάσταση των στρατιωτικών σωμάτων της αυτοκρατορίας σε συγκεκριμένες επαρχίες. Οι σφραγίδες των αποθηκών υποδηλώνουν ότι ο στρατός των Αρμενιακών ήταν ο πρώτος στον οποίο αποδόθηκε μία συγκεκριμένη περιφέρεια (πριν το 717/8), με την οποία ταυτίστηκε, ενώ οι αφηγηματικές πηγές υποδηλώνουν ότι ανάλογη ήταν η εξέλιξη για τον στρατό των Ανατολικών (πριν το 716/7). Η παραχώρηση εδαφών παρόλα αυτά δεν συνεπαγόταν την υποχρεωτική περιφερειακή ταύτιση της λειτουργίας των δύο θεσμών, αφού οι αποθήκες συνέχισαν περίπου μέχρι το 740 να λειτουργούν με βάση τις παλαιές επαρχίες. Αν ωστόσο παραδεχθούμε ότι οι αποθήκες συνδέονται με τα στρατιωτικά σώματα της αυτοκρατορίας, τότε θα πρέπει επίσης να παραδεχθούμε ότι η γεωγραφική κατάταξη των αποθηκών στις επαρχίες, όπως αυτή αποδίδεται στους χάρτες 1 και 2 της παρούσας μελέτης, αντικατοπτρίζουν την κατάσταση της πρωτοβυζαντινής εποχής, ότι δηλαδή οι στρατιές

των Αρμενιακών και των Ανατολικών συγκεντρώνονταν στις περιοχές τις επιχειρησιακής τους δράσης, στην Αρμενία, την Καππαδοκία, την Ισαυρία, την Κιλικία. Είναι εξάλλου ιδιαίτερα εύγλωττο το γεγονός ότι οι περισσότερες από τις σωζόμενες σφραγίδες των αποθηκών προέρχονται από τις εμπόλεμες μεταξύ 7ου και 8ου αι. ζώνες της αυτοκρατορίας, την Αρμενία και τη Λαζική. Οι πραγματικές αλλαγές στο σύστημα αυτό λοιπόν φαίνεται πως επήλθαν μόλις επί Ιουστινιανού Β΄, οπότε ο θεσμός των αποθηκών επεκτάθηκε σε ολόκληρη τη Μικρά Ασία και ένα νέο στρατιωτικό σώμα προστέθηκε στα ήδη υπάρχοντα, αυτό των Θρακησίων, ενώ εκείνοι που κατεξοχήν προώθησαν τις αλλαγές που επέφερε ο συγκεκριμένος αυτοκράτορας στο θεσμό των αποθηκών/βασιλικών κομμερκίων ήταν ο Λέων Γ΄ και ο Κωνσταντίνος Ε΄.